Suras Information.

By Al Mawdudi

1-Al Fatiha

Name

This Sura is named Al-Fatiha because of its subject-matter. Fatihah is that which opens a subject or a book or any other thing. In other words, Al-Fatihah is a sort of preface.

Verses

This Sura has a total of 7 verses.

Period of Revelation

It is one of the very earliest Revelations to the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, we learn from authentic Traditions that it was the first complete Sura which was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH). Before this, only a few miscellaneous verses were revealed which form parts of Sura Alaq, Muzzammil, Muddathir, etc.

Theme

This Sura is in fact a prayer which Allah has taught to all those who want to make a study of his book. It has been placed at the very beginning of the book to teach this lesson to the reader: if you sincerely want to benefit from the Qur'an, you should offer this prayer to the Lord of the Universe.

This preface is meant to create a strong desire in the heart of the reader to seek guidance from the Lord of the Universe, who alone can grant it. Thus Al-Fatiha indirectly teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for guidance to the straight path, to study the Qur'an with the mental attitude of a seeker-after-truth and to recognize the fact that the Lord of the Universe is the source of all knowledge. He should, therefor, begin the study of the Qur'an with a prayer to him for guidance.

From this theme, it becomes clear that the real relation between Al-Fatiha and the Qur'an is not that of an introduction to a book but that of a prayer and its answer. Al-Fatiha is the prayer from the servant and the Qur'an is the answer from the Master to his prayer. The servant prays to Allah to show him guidance and the Master places the whole of the Qur'an before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say, "This is the Guidance you begged from Me. "

2. Baqara:

Name

Why the name AL-BAQARAH? AL-BAQARAH (the Cow) has been so named from the story of the Cow occurring in this Surah (vv. 67-73). It has not, however, been used as a title to indicate the subject of the Surah. It will, therefore, be as wrong to translate the name Al-Baqarah into "The Cow" or "The Heifer" as to translate any English name, say Baker, Rice, Wolf etc. , into their equivalents in other languages or vice versa, because this would imply that the Surah dealt with the subject of "The Cow". Many

more Surahs of the Qur'an have been named in the same way because no comprehensive words exist in Arabic (in spite of its richness) to denote the wide scope of the subject discussed in them. As a matter of fact all human languages suffer from the same limitation.

Sequence

Though it is a Madani Surah, it follows naturally a Makki Sarah Al-Fatihah, which ended with the prayer : "Show us the straight way". It begins with the answer to that prayer, "This is the Book (that). . . is guidance. The greater part of Al-Baqarah was revealed during the first two years of the Holy Prophet's life at Al-Madinah. The smaller part which was revealed at a later period has been included in this Surah because its contents are closely related to those dealt with in this Sura. For instance, the verses prohibiting interest were revealed during the last period of the Holy prophet's life but have been inserted in this Sura. For the same reason, the last verses (284-286) of this Sura which were revealed at Makkah before the migration of the Holy Prophet to AI-Madinah have also been included in it.

Historical Background

In order to understand the meaning of this Sura, we should know its historical background:

-1. At Makkah the Qur'an generally addressed the mushrik Quraish who were ignorant of Islam, but at Al-Madinah it was also concerned with the Jews who were acquainted with the creed of the Unity of Allah, Prophet-hood, Revelation, the Hereafter and angels. They also professed to believe in the law which was revealed by Allah to their Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him), and in principle, their way was the same (Islam) that was being taught by Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). But they had strayed away from it during the centuries of degeneration and had adopted many un-Islamic creeds, rites and customs of which there was no mention and for which there was no sanction in the Torah.

Not only this : they had tampered with the Torah by inserting their own explanations and interpretations into its text. They had distorted even that part of the Word of God which had remained intact in their Scriptures and taken out of it the real spirit of true religion and were now clinging to a lifeless frame of rituals. Consequently their beliefs, their morals and their conduct had gone to the lowest depths of degeneration. The pity is that they were not only satisfied with their condition but loved to cling to it. Besides this, they had no intention or inclination to accept any kind of reform.

So they became bitter enemies of those who came to teach them the Right Way and did their worst to defeat every such effort. Though they were originally Muslims, they had swerved from the real Islam and made innovations and alterations in it and had fallen victims to hair splitting and sectarianism. They had forgotten and forsaken Allah and begun to serve mammon. So much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and made religion the sole monopoly of the children of Israel. This was their religious condition when the Holy Prophet went to Al-Madinah and invited the Jews to the true religion. That is why more than one third of

this Surah has been addressed to the children of Israel. A critical review of their history, their moral degeneration and their religious perversions has been made; side by side with this the high standard of morality and the fundamental principles of the pure religion have been put forward in order to bring out clearly the nature of the degeneration of the community of a prophet when it goes astray and to draw clear lines of demarcation between real piety and formalism, and the essentials and non-essentials of the true religion.

-2. At Makkah Islam was mainly concerned with the propagation of its fundamental principles and the moral training of its followers. But after the migration of the Holy Prophet to Al-Madinah, where Muslims had come to settle from all over Arabia and where a tiny Islamic State had been set up with the help of the Ansaar (local supporters), naturally the Qur'an had to turn its attention to the social, cultural, economic, political and legal problems as well. This accounts for the difference between the themes of the surahs revealed at Makkah and those at Al-Madinah. Accordingly about half of this Surah deals with those principles and regulations which are essential for the integration and solidarity of a community and for the solution of its problems.

After the migration to Al-Madinah, the struggle between Islam and un-Islam had also entered a new phase. Before this the Believers, who propagated Islam among their own clans and tribes, had to face its opponents at their own risk. But the conditions had changed at Al-Madinah, where Muslims from all parts of Arabia had come and settled as one community, and had established an independent city state. Here it became a struggle for the' survival of the Community itself, for the whole of non-Muslim Arabia was bent upon and united in crushing it totally. Hence the following instructions, upon which depended not only its success but its very survival, were revealed in this Surah

(a) The Community should work with the utmost zeal to propagate its ideology and win over to its side the greatest possible number of people.

(b) It should so expose its opponents as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of any sensible person that they were adhering to an absolutely wrong position.

(c) It should infuse in it's members (the majority of whom were homeless and indigent and surrounded on all sides by enemies) that courage and fortitude which is so indispensable to their very existence in the adverse circumstances in which they were struggling and to prepare them to face these boldly.

(d) It should also keep them ready and prepared to meet any armed menace, which might come from any side to suppress and crush their ideology, and to oppose it tooth and nail without minding the overwhelming numerical strength and the material resources of its enemies

(e) It should also create in them that courage which is needed for the eradication of evil ways and for the establishment of the Islamic Way instead. That is why Allah has revealed in this Surah such instructions as may help achieve all the above mentioned objects.

-4. During this period, a new type of "Muslims, " munafiqin (hypocrites), had begun to appear. Though signs of duplicity had been noticed during the last days at Makkah, they

took a different shape at Al-Madinah. At Makkah there were some people who professed Islam to be true but were not prepared to abide by the consequences of this profession and to sacrifice their worldly interests and relations and bear the afflictions which inevitably follow the acceptance of this creed. But at Al-Madinah different kinds of munafiqin (hypocrites) began to appear. There were some who had entered the Islamic fold merely to harm it from within. There were others who were surrounded by Muslims and, therefore, had become "Muslims" to safeguard their worldly interests. They, therefore, continued to have relations with the enemies so that if the latter became successful, their interests should remain secure. There were still others who had no strong conviction of the truth of Islam but had embraced it along with their clans. Lastly, there were those who were intellectually convinced of the truth of Islam but did not have enough moral courage to give up their former traditions, superstitions and personal ambitions and live up to the Islamic moral standards and make sacrifice in its way.
At the time of the revelation of Al-Baqarah, all sorts of hypocrites had begun to appear. Allah has, therefore, briefly pointed out their characteristics here. Afterwards when their evil characteristics and mischievous deeds became manifest, Allah sent detailed instructions about them.
Theme: Guidance
This Surah is an invitation to the Divine Guidance and all the stories, incidents etc. , revolve round this central theme. As this Surah has particularly been addressed to the Jews, many historical events have been cited from their own traditions to admonish and advise them that their own good lies in accepting the Guidance revealed to the Holy Prophet. They should, therefore, be the first to accept it because it was basically the same that was revealed to Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

3. Aal-Imran:

Name
This Surah takes its name from v. 33. Aal-Imran, like the names of many other surahs, is merely a name to distinguish it from other surahs and does not imply that the family of Imran has been discussed in it.
The Period of Revelation
This Surah consists of four discourses The first discourse (vv. 1-32) was probably revealed soon after the Battle of Badr. The second discourse (vv. 33-63) was revealed in 9 A. H. on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christians of Najran. The third discourse (vv. 64-120) appears to have been revealed immediately after the first one. The fourth discourse (vv. 121-200) was revealed after the Battle of Uhud.
Subject
Though these discourses were revealed at different periods and on different occasions, they are so inter-linked and so inter-connected iii regard to their aim, object and central theme that they make together one continuous whole. This Sura has been especially

addressed to two groups-the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) and the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).
The message has been extended to the Jews and the Christians in continuation of the invitation in Al-Baqarah, in which they have been admonished for their erroneous beliefs and evil morals and advised to accept, as a remedy, the Truth of the Qur'an. They have been told here that Muhammad (Allah's peace be, upon him) taught the same right way of life that had been preached by their own Prophets; that it alone was the Right Way, the way of Allah; hence any deviation from it will be wrong even according to their own Scriptures.
The second group, the Muslims, who had been declared to be the best Community in Al-Baqarah and appointed torch-bearers of the Truth and entrusted with the responsibility of reforming the world, have been given additional instructions in continuation of those given in the preceding Surah. The Muslims have been warned to learn a lesson from the religious and moral degeneration of the former communities and to refrain from treading in their footsteps. Instructions have also been given about the reformative work they had to perform. Besides this, they have been taught how to deal with the people of the Book and the hypocrites who were putting different kinds of hindrances in the way of Allah. Above all, they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses which had come to the surface in the Battle Uhud.
Background
The following is the background of the Surah: (1) The Believers had met with all sorts of trials and hardships about which they had been forewarned in Al-Baqarah. Though they had come out victorious in the Battle of Badr, they were not out of danger yet. Their victory had aroused the enmity of all those powers in Arabia which were opposed to the Islamic Movement. Signs of threatening storms had begun to appear on all sides and the Muslims were in a perpetual state of fear and anxiety. It looked as if the whole Arabian world around the tiny state of Al-Madinah which was no more than a village state at that time-was bent upon blotting out its very existence. This state of war was also adversely affecting its economy, which had already been badly disturbed by the influx of the Muslim refugees from Makkah.
(2) Then there was the disturbing problem of the Jewish clans who lived in the suburbs of Al-Madinah. They were discarding the treaties of alliance they had made with the Holy Prophet after his migration from Makkah. So much so that on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, these people of the Book sympathized with the evil aims of the idolaters, in spite of the fact that their fundamental articles of the Faith - Oneness of Allah, Prophet-hood, Life-after-death - were the same as those of the Muslims. After the Battle of Badr, they openly began to incite the Quraish and other Arab clans to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims. Thus those Jewish clans set aside their centuries-old friendly and neighborly relations with the people of Al-Madinah. At last when their mischievous actions and breaches of treaties became unbearable, the Holy Prophet attacked the Bani-Qainu-qa'a, the most mischievous of all the other Jewish clans who had conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madinah and the idolatrous Arab clans to

encircle the Believers on all sides. The magnitude of the peril might be judged from the fact that even the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore his Companions slept in their armors during that period and kept watch at night to guard against any sudden attack, and whenever the Holy Prophet happened to be out of sight even for a short while, they would at once set out in search of him.

(3) This incitement by the Jews added fuel to the fire which was burning in the hearts of the Quraish and they began to make preparations to avenge the defeat they had suffered at Bad. A year after this an army of 3, 000 strong marched out of Makkah to invade Al-Madinah and a battle took place at the foot of Mount Uhud. The Holy Prophet came out of Al-Madinah with one thousand men to meet the enemy. While they were marching to the battle-field, three hundred hypocrites deserted the army and returned to Al-Madinah, but there still remained a small band of hypocrites among the seven hundred who accompanied the Holy Prophet. They played their part and did their worst to create mischief and chaos in the ranks of the Believers during the Battle. This was the first clear indication of the fact that within the fold of the Muslim Community there was quite a large number of saboteurs who were always ready to conspire with the external enemies to harm their own brethren.

(4) Though the devices of the hypocrites had played a great part in the set-back at Uhud, the weaknesses of the Muslims themselves contributed no less to it. And it was but natural that the Muslims should show signs of moral weakness for they were a new community which had only recently been formed on a new ideology and had not as yet got a thorough moral training. Naturally in this second hard test of their physical and moral strength, some weaknesses came to the surface. That is why a detailed review of the Battle of Uhud was needed to warn the Muslims of their shortcomings and to issue instructions for their reform. It should also be noted that this review of the Battle is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by generals on similar occasions.

Subject: Guidance

This Surah is the sequel to, Al-Baqarah and the invitation therein is continued to the people of the Book. In Al-Baqarah the Jews were pointedly invited to accept the Guidance and in this Surah the Christians have particularly been admonished to give up their erroneous beliefs and accept the Guidance of the Qur'an. At the same time, the Muslims have been instructed to nourish the virtues that may enable them to carry out their obligations and spread the Divine Guidance.

4. Nisaa:

Period of Revelation

This Surah comprises several discourses which were revealed on different occasions during the period ranging probably between the end of A. H. 3 and the end of A. H. 4 or the beginning of A. H. 5. Although it is difficult to determine the exact dates of their revelations, yet it is possible to assign to them a fairly correct period with the help of the Commandments and the events mentioned therein and the Traditions concerning them. A few instances are given below by way of illustration

(a) We know that the instructions about the division of inheritance of the martyrs and for the safeguard of the rights of the orphans were sent down after the Battle of Uhud in which 70 Muslims were killed. Then naturally the question of the division of the inheritance of the martyrs and the safeguard of the rights of their orphans arose in many families at Al-Madinah. From this we conclude that vv. 1 -28 were revealed on that occasion.

(b) We learn from the Traditions that the Commandment about salat during war time was given on the occasion of Zat-ur-Riqa'a, an expedition which took place in A. H. 4. From this we conclude that the discourse containing v. 102 was revealed on that occasion.

(c) The last warning (v. 47) to the Jews was given before the Banu Nadir were exiled from Al-Madinah in Rabi'-ul-Awwal, A. H. 4. From this it may safely be concluded that the discourse containing v. 47 must have been revealed some time before that date.

(d) The permission about tayammum (the performance of ablutions with pure dust, in case no water be available) was given during the Bani-al-Mustaliq expedition, which took place in A. H. 5. Therefore the probable period of the revelation of the discourse containing v. 43 was A. H. 5.

Topics and Their Background

Let us now consider the social and historical considerations of the period in order to understand the Surah. All the discourses in this Surah deal with three main problems which confronted the Holy Prophet at the time. First of all, he was engaged in bringing about an all round development of the Islamic Community that had been formed at the time of his migration to Al-Madinah. For this purpose he was introducing new moral, cultural, social, economic and political ways in place of the old ones of the pre-Islamic period. The second thing that occupied his attention and efforts was the bitter struggle that was going on with the mushrik Arabs, the Jewish clans and the hypocrites who were opposing tooth and nail his mission of reform. Above all he had to propagate Islam in the face of the bitter opposition of these powers of evil with a view to capturing more and more minds and hearts.

Accordingly, detailed instructions have been given for the consolidation and strengthening of the Islamic Community in continuation of those given in Al-Baqarah. Principles for the smooth running of family life have been laid down and ways of settling family disputes have been taught. Rules have been prescribed for marriage and rights of wife and husband have been apportioned fairly and equitably. The status of women in the society has been determined and the declaration of the rights of orphans has been made laws and regulations have been laid down for the division of inheritance, and instructions have been given to reform economic affairs. The foundation of the penal code has been laid down drinking has been prohibited, and instructions have been given for cleanliness and purity. The Muslims have been taught the kind of relations good men should have with their Allah and fellow men. Instructions have been given for the maintenance of discipline in the Muslim Community.

The moral and religious condition of the people of the Book has been reviewed to teach lessons to the Muslims and to forewarn them to refrain from following in their footsteps. The conduct of the hypocrites has been criticized and the distinctive features of hypocrisy and true faith have been clearly marked off to enable the Muslims to distinguish between the two. In order to cope with the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud, Inspiring discourses were sent down to urge the Muslims to face the enemy bravely, for the defeat in the Battle had so emboldened the mushrik Arab clans and the neighboring Jews and the hypocrites at home that they were threatening the Muslims on all sides. At this critical juncture, Allah filled the Muslims with courage and gave them such instructions as were needed during that period of war clouds. In order to counteract the fearful rumors that were being spread by the hypocrites and the Muslims of weak faith, they were asked to make a thorough enquiry into them and to inform the responsible people about them. Then they were experiencing some difficulties in offering their salat during the expeditions to some places where no water was available for performing their ablutions, etc. In such cases they were allowed to cleanse themselves with pure earth and to shorten the salat or to offer the "Salat of Fear", when they were faced with danger. Instructions were also given for the solution of the puzzling problem of those Muslims who were scattered among the unbelieving Arab clans and were often involved in war. They were asked to migrate to Al-Madinah, the abode of Islam.
This Surah also deals with the case of Bani Nadir who were showing a hostile and menacing attitude, in spite of the peace treaties they had made with the Muslims. They were openly siding with the enemies of Islam and hatching plots against the Holy Prophet and the Muslim Community even at AI-Madinah itself. They were taken to task for their inimical behavior and given a final warning to change their attitude, and were at last exiled from Al-Madinah on account of their misconduct.
The problem of the hypocrites, who had become very troublesome at that time, was involving the Believers in difficulties. Therefore they were divided into different categories to enable the Muslims to deal with them appropriately. Clear instructions were also given regarding the attitude they should adopt towards the non-belligerent clans. The most important thing needed at that time was to prepare the Muslims for the bitter struggle with the opponents of Islam. For this purpose greatest importance was attached to their character building, for it was obvious that the small Muslim Community could only come out successful, nay, survive, if the Muslims possessed high moral character. They were, therefore, enjoined to adopt the highest moral qualities and were severely criticized whenever any moral weakness was detected in them.
Though this Surah mainly deals with the moral and social reforms, yet due attention has been paid to propagation of Islam. On the one hand, the superiority of the Islamic morality and culture has been established over that of the Jews, Christians and mushriks; on the other hand, their wrong religious conceptions, their wrong morality and their evil acts have been criticized to prepare the ground for inviting them to the way of the Truth.
Subject: Consolidation of the Islamic Community

The main object of this Surah is to teach the Muslims the ways that unite a people and make them firm and strong. Introductions for the stability of family, which is the nucleus of community have been given. Then they have been urged to prepare themselves for defense. Side by side with these, they have been taught the importance of the propagation of Islam. Above all, the importance of the highest moral character in the scheme of consolidation of the Community has been impressed.

5. Mai'dah:

Name

This Sarah takes its' name from verse 112 in which the word Mai'dah occurs. Like the names of many other surahs, this name has no special relation to the subject of the Surah but has been used merely as a symbol to distinguish it from other surahs:

Period of Revelation

The theme of this Surah indicates, and traditions support it, that it was revealed after the treaty of Hudaibiyah at the end of 6 A. H. or in the beginning of 7 A. H. That is why it deals with those problems that arose from this treaty.

The Holy Prophet with 1400 Muslims went to Makkah in Zil-Qaa`dah 6 A. H. to perform Umrah, but the Quraish spurred by their enmity, prevented him from its performance, though it was utterly against all the ancient religious traditions of Arabia. After a good deal of hard and harsh negotiations, a treaty was concluded at Hudaibiyah according to which it was agreed that he could perform Umrah the following year. That was a very appropriate occasion for teaching the Muslims the right way of performing a pilgrimage to Makkah with the true Islamic dignity, and enjoining that they should not prevent the disbelievers from performing pilgrimage to Makkah as a retaliation for their misbehavior. This was not difficult at all as many disbelievers had to pass through Muslim territory on their way to Makkah. This is why the introductory verses deal with the things connected with pilgrimage to Makkah and the same theme has been resumed in vv. 101-104. The other topics of this Surah also appear to belong to the same period.

The continuity of the subject shows that most probably the whole of the surah was revealed as a single discourse at one and the same time. It is also possible that some of its verses were revealed at a later period and inserted in this Surah at different places where they fitted in. But there appears to be not the least gap anywhere in the surah to show that it might have comprised two or more discourses. Occasion of Revelation. This Surah was revealed to suit the requirements of the changed conditions which were now different from those prevailing at the time of the revelation of Aal-'Imran and An-Nisa. Then the shock of the set-back at Uhud had made the very surroundings of Al-Madinah dangerous for the Muslims, but now Islam had become an invulnerable power and the Islamic State had extended to Najd on the east, to the Red Sea on the west, to Syria on the north and to Makkah on the south. This set-back which the Muslims had suffered at Uhud had not broken their determination. It had rather spurred them to action. As a result of their continuous struggle and unparalleled sacrifices, the power of. the surrounding clans, within a radius of 200 miles or so, had been broken. The Jewish

menace which was always threatening Al-Madinah had been totally removed and the Jews in the other parts of Hijaz had-become tributaries of the State of Al-Madinah. The last effort of the Quraish to suppress Islam had been thwarted in the Battle of the Ditch. After this, it had become quite obvious to the Arabs that no power could suppress the Islamic movement. Now Islam was not merely a creed which ruled over the minds and hearts of the people but had also become a State which dominated over every aspect of the life of the people who lived within its boundaries. This had enabled the Muslims to live their lives without let or hindrance, in accordance with their beliefs.

Another development had also taken place during this period. The Muslim civilization had developed in accord; ance with the principles of Islam and the Islamic viewpoint. This civilization was quite distinct from all other civilizations in all its' details, and distinguished the Muslims clearly from the non Muslims in their moral, social and cultural behavior. Mosques had been built in all territories, prayer had been established and' Imam (leader) for every habitation and clan had been appointed. The Islamic civil and criminal laws had been formulated in detail and were being enforced through the Islamic courts. New and reformed ways of trade and commerce had taken the place of the old ones. The Islamic laws of marriage and divorce, of the segregation of the sexes, of the punishment for adultery and calumny and the like had cast the social life of the Muslims in a special mold. Their social behavior, their conversation, their dress, their very mode of living, their culture etc. , had taken a definite shape of its own. As a result of all these changes, the non-Muslims could not expect that the Muslims would ever return to their former fold. Before the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Muslims were so engaged in their struggle with the non-Muslim Quraish that they got no time to propagate their message. This hindrance was removed by what was apparently a defeat but in reality a victory at Hudaibiyah. This gave the Muslims not only peace in their own territory but also respite to spread their message in the surrounding territories. Accordingly the Holy Prophet addressed letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt and the Roman Empire and the chiefs of Arabia, inviting them to Islam. At the same time the missionaries of Islam spread among the clans and tribes and invited them to accept the Divine Way of Allah. These were the circumstances at the time when Al-Ma'idah was revealed.

Topics

It deals with the following three main topics: (1) Commandments and instructions about the religious, cultural and political life of the Muslims. In this connection, a code of ceremonial rules concerning the journey for Hajj has been prescribed; the observance of strict respect for the emblems of Allah has been enjoined; and any kind of obstruction or interference with the pilgrims to the Kaabah has been prohibited. Definite rules and regulations have been laid down for what is lawful and unlawful in the matter of food, and self-imposed foolish restrictions of the pre-Islamic age have been abolished. Permission has been given to. take food with the people of the Book and to marry their women. Rules and regulations for the performance of Wudu (ablutions) and bath and purification and tayammum (ablutions with dust) have been prescribed. Punishment for

rebellion, disturbance of peace and theft have been specified. Drinking and gambling have absolutely been made unlawful. Expiation for the breaking of oath has been laid down and a few more things have been added to the law of evidence.
(2) Admonition to the Muslims. Now that the Muslims had become a ruling body, it was feared that power might corrupt them. At this period of great trial, Allah had admonished them over and over again to stick to justice and to guard against the wrong behavior of their predecessors, the people of the Book. They have been enjoined to remain steadfast to the Covenant of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and to observe strictly their commands and prohibitions in order to save them-selves from the evil consequences which. befell the Jews and the Christians who had violated them. They have been instructed to observe the dictates of the Holy Qur'an in the conduct of all their affairs and warned against the attitude of hypocrisy.
(3) Admonition to the Jews and the Christians. As the power of the Jews had been totally weakened and almost all their habitations in north Arabia had come under the rule of the Muslims, they have been warned again about their wrong attitude and invited to follow the Right Way. At the same time a detailed invitation has also been extended to the Christians. The errors of their creeds have been clearly pointed out and they have been admonished to accept the guidance of the Holy Prophet. . Incidentally, it may be noted that no direct invitation has been made to the Majusis and idolaters living in the adjoining countries, because there was no need for a separate address for them as their condition. had already been covered by the addresses to the mushrik Arabs.
Subject: Consolidation of the Islamic Community.
In continuation of the instructions about the consolidation of the Islamic Community given in Surah AN-NISA, the Muslims have been directed to observe and fulfill all their obligations: further regulations have been prescribed to train the Muslims for that purpose. They have also been particularly warned as rulers to guard against the corruption, of power and directed to observe the Covenant of the Qur'an. They have also been exhorted to learn lessons from the failings of their predecessors, the Jews and the Christians, who in their turn have been admonished to give up their wrong attitudes towards the Right Way and accept the guidance taught by Prophet Muhammad (God's peace be upon him).

6. An-aam:

Name
This Surah takes its name from vv. 136, 138 and 139 in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle (anam) and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.
Period of Revelation
According to a tradition of Ibn Abbas, the whole of the Surah was revealed at one sitting at Makkah. Asma, a daughter of Yazid and a first cousin of Hadrat Mu'az-bin Jabl, says,. "During the revelation of this Surah, the Holy Prophet was riding on a she-camel and I was holding her nose-string. The she-camel began to feel the weight so

heavily that it seemed as if her bones would break under it. " We also learn from other traditions that the Holy Prophet dictated the whole of the Surah the same night that it was revealed.

Its subject-matter clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah. The tradition of Asma, daughter of Yazid, also confirms this. As she belonged to the Ansaar and embraced Islam after the migration of the Holy Prophet to Yathrib, her visit to the Holy Prophet at Makkah must have taken place during the last year of his life there. For before this, his relations with those people were not so intimate that a woman from there might have come to visit him at Makkah.

Occasion of Revelation

After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualize the background of the Surah. Twelve years had passed since the Holy Prophet had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the Quraish had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and migrate to Habash (Abyssinia). Above all, the two great supporters of the Holy Prophet. Abu Talib and Hadrat Khadijah, were no more to help and give strength to him. Thus he was deprived of all the worldly support. But in spite of this, he carried on his mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result of this, on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam; on the other hand, the community as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrib, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced Islam at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared at that time as if Islam was merely a weak movement it had no material backing except the meager support of the Prophet's own family and of the few poor adherents of the Movement. Obviously the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

Topics

These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings: (1) Refutation of shirk and invitation to the creed of Tawhid. (2) Enunciation of the doctrine of the "Life-after-death. " and refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life. (3) Refutation of the prevalent superstitions. (4) Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic Society. (5) Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Holy Prophet and his mission. (6) Comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet and his followers who were at, that time in a state of anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission. (7) Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their

apathy and haughtiness. It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion over and over again in new and different ways.

The Background of Makki Surahs

As this is the first long Makki Surah in the order of the compilation of the Qur'an, it will be useful to explain the historical background of Makki Surahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makki Surahs and our references to its different stages in connection with our commentary on them. First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of Makki Surahs whereas the period of the revelation of all the Madani Surahs is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makki Surahs. There are only a few Surahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the time and occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makki period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madani period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Surahs for determining the period of their revelation: for example, the topics they discuss, their subject. matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that with the help of such evidence as this, we cannot say with precision that such and such Surah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Surah with the events of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and then come to a more or less correct conclusion as to what particular stage a certain Surah belongs. If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah can be divided into four stages.

The first stage began with his appointment as a Messenger and ended with the proclamation of Prophet-hood three years later. During this period the Message was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for two years after the proclamation of his Prophet-hood. It began with opposition by individuals: then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision,, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda then gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak' and helpless. The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution to the death of Abu Talib and Hadrat Khadijah in the tenth year of Prophet-hood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became' so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to Habash. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Holy Prophet and the members of his family, and those Muslims who continued to stay in Makkah were forced to take refuge in Shi'b-Abi Talib which was besieged.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years from the tenth to the thirteenth year of Prophet-hood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Holy

Prophet and his followers. Life had become unendurable at Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside it. So much so that when the Holy Prophet went to Ta'if, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Hajj, he would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels' to get rid of him by killing or imprisoning or banishing him from their city. It was at that most critical time that Allah opened for Islam the hearts of the Ansaar of Yathrib where he migrated at their invitation. Now that we have divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Sarah was revealed. This is because the Surahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of their subject matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In the succeeding Makki Surahs, we will determine on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage, and point out in the Preface, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Surah was revealed.

Subject : Islamic Creed.

This Surah mainly discusses the different aspects of the
major articles of the Islamic Creed: Tawhid, Life-after-death, Prophet-hood an' their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the "opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Holy Prophet and his followers, who were then suffering from persecution. of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate heads but have been blended in an excellent manner.

7. A`raaf:

Name

This Surah takes its name from vv. 46-47 in which mention of A`raaf occurs.

Period of Revelation

A study of its contents clearly shows that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of AL-AN'AM, i. e. , the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, but it cannot be asserted with certainty which of these two was sent down earlier. Anyhow the manner of its admonition clearly indicates that it belongs to the same period. As both have the same historical background the reader should keep in view the preface to AL-AN'AM.

Topics of Discussion

The principal subject of this surah is "invitation to the Divine Message sent down to Muhammad" (Allah's peace be upon him), which is couched in a warning. This is because the Messenger had spent a long time in admonishing the people of Makkah without any tangible effect on them. Nay, they had turned a deaf ear to his message and become so obdurate and antagonistic that, in accordance with the Divine Design, the Messenger was going to be commanded to leave them and turn to other people,. That is

why they are being admonished to accept the Message but, at the same time, they are being warned in strong terms of the consequences that followed the wrong attitude of the former people towards their Messengers. (Now that the Holy Prophet was going to" migrate from Makkah the concluding portion of the address has been directed towards the people of the Book with whom he was going to come into contact. This meant that the time of migration was coming near and the "invitation" was going to be extended to mankind in general, and was not to be confined to his own people in particular as before. During the course of the address to the Jews, the consequences of their hypocritical conduct towards Prophet-hood have also been pointed out clearly, for they professed to believe in Prophet Moses but in practice opposed his teachings, disobeyed him and worshipped falsehood and consequently were afflicted with ignominy and disgrace.

At the end of the Surah, some instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet and his followers for carrying out the work of the propagation of Islam with wisdom. The most important of these is that they should show patience and exercise restraint in answer to the provocations of their opponents. Above all, they have been advised that under stress of the excitement of feeling, they should not take any wrung step that might harm their cause.

Subject: Invitation to the Divine Message

8. Anfaal:

Name

The Surah takes its name AL-ANFAL (The Bounties) from the first verse.

The Period of Revelation

It was revealed in 2 A. H. after the Battle of Badr, the first battle between Islam and kufr. As it contains a detailed and comprehensive review of the Battle, it appears that most probably it was revealed at one and the same time. But it is also possible that some of the verses concerning the problems arising as a result of this Battle might have been revealed later and incorporated at the proper places to make it a continuous whole. At any rate, in the whole Surah there is nothing that might show that it is a collection of a couple of discourses, that have been patched up together.

Historical Background

Before reviewing the Surah, it is worthwhile to consider the events that led to the Battle of Badr. During the first decade or so of the Prophet-hood at Makkah, the Message had proved its firmness, and stability. This was the result of two things. First, the Messenger, who possessed the highest qualities of character, was performing his Mission with wisdom, foresight and magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry the movement to a successful end and, therefore, was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly, the Message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards itself. So much so that all obstacles of ignorance, superstition and petty prejudices failed to check, its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of "ignorance, ' who

looked down upon it in its initial stages, had' begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and were bent on crushing it with all the force at their command. But in spite of the above-mentioned strength, the movement still lacked certain things to lead it to victory

First, it had not yet been fully proved that it had gathered round it a sufficient number of such followers who not only believed in its truth, but also had such an intense devotion to its principles that they were ready to expend all their energies and all that they possessed in the struggle for its success and establishment. So much so that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the fight against the whole world itself even though they should be their own nearest relative. It is true that the followers of Islam had endured the severest persecutions at the hands of the Quraish of Makkah and had given a good proof of the firmness of their faith and their strong relation with Islam, yet further trials were required to show that Islam had succeeded in acquiring such a band of followers which considered nothing dearer than its ideal and was ready to sacrifice life for it.

Secondly, though the voice of Islam had reached' every part of the country, its effects were yet scattered and its acquired strength was spread here and there: it had not yet gathered sufficient force essential for a decisive conflict with the old established order of "ignorance".

Thirdly, Islam had yet no home of its own and had not established itself firmly anywhere in the land where it could consolidate its power and make it a base for further action. For the Muslims were scattered all over the country and were living among the unbelievers as aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

Fourthly, the Muslims had not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate practically the blessings of the system of life based on Islam. There was neither any Islamic culture, nor any social, economic or political system; nor were there any established principles of war and peace for their guidance. Therefore the Muslims had no opportunity for demonstrating those moral principles on which they intended to build their entire system of life; nor had it been proved on the touchstone of trial that the Muslims as a community were sincere in the proclamation of the Message.

Allah created opportunities for making up these deficiencies. During the last four years or so of the Prophet's stay at Makkah, the voice of Islam had been proving effective at Yathrib and the people for various reasons had been accepting the message more readily than other clans of Arabia. So much so that in the twelfth year of Prophet-hood on the occasion of Hajj a deputation of 75 people met the Holy Prophet in the darkness of night. These people not only accepted Islam, but also offered to give him and his followers a home.

As this was a most epoch making opportunity provided by Allah, the Holy Prophet took advantage of it. The significance of this offer was quite clear to the people of Yathrib, and they fully realized that this was not an invitation to a mere fugitive, but to the Messenger of Allah so that he should become their leader and ruler. Likewise they knew that they were not inviting the Muslim refugees to give them shelter from persecution

but to assemble them from all over the country for their integration with themselves to form an organized community.

Thus the offer of the people of Yathrib was to make Yathrib the "City of Islam. " Accordingly the Holy Prophet accepted their invitation and made it the first "City of Islam" in Arabia. And the people of Yathrib were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the Ansaar from Yathrib declared their allegiance to the Holy Prophet at Aqabah, they knew fully well its consequences.

During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad-bin-Zurarah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrib, stood up and said, "0 people of Yathrib! Just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger of Allah, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrib, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and Allah will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his Message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time Allah may accept your excuses.

Abbas bin Ubadah bin Naalah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying, Do you understand the implication of the declaration of your allegiance to this person? " (Voices, "Yes, we know it. ") "You are challenging the whole world to war by your declaration of allegiance to him. There is every likelihood of a serious menace to your lives and properties. Therefore consider it well. If you have any idea lurking in your minds that you will then hand him over to his enemies, it is much better to leave him alone now, because that conduct shall bring shame and disgrace to you in this world and the next. On the other hand, if you have sincerely resolved that you will endure all kinds of consequences that will follow as a result of this invitation, then it would be the best thing to take the oath of allegiance to him because, by God, this will surely bring good to you in this world as well as in the next world. " At this all the members of the delegation cried with one voice, "We are ready and prepared to risk all our wealth and our noble kith and kin for his sake. " It was then that the famous oath of allegiance, which is known as the "Second Oath of Allegiance at Aqabah" was taken.

On the other side, the people of Makkah also understood fully well the implications of this matter from their own point of view. They realized that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), who, they knew well, had a great personality and possessed extraordinary abilities, was going to gain a strong footing, by this allegiance. For this would help integrate his followers, whose constancy, determination, and unwavering fidelity to the Messenger had been tried, into a disciplined community under his wise leadership and guidance. And they knew that this would spell death for their old ways of life.

They also realized the strategic importance of. Al-Madinah to their trade, which was their chief means of livelihood. Its geographical position was such that the Muslims

could strike with advantage at the caravans traveling on the trade route between Yaman and Syria, and thus strike at the root of their economy and that of other pagan clans very effectively. The value of the trade done by the people of Makkah alone on this route, not to count that of Taif and other places, amounted to about two hundred thousand dinars annually. As the Quraish were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at Aqabah, they were greatly perturbed when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Al-Madinah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Al-Madinah in small groups, they realized that the Holy Prophet was also going to emigrate soon from there. Then they decided to adopt an extreme measure to prevent this danger.

A few days before his migration, the Quraish held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument; they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraish other than that of Banu Hashim to put an end to the life of the Holy Prophet. This was to make it difficult for the family of the Holy Prophet to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraish and thus to force them to accept blood-money for his murder-instead of taking revenge from them, but by the grace of Allah their plot against the life of the Holy Prophet failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in Allah, and he reached Al-Madinah safe and sound.

When they could not prevent his emigration, it occurred to them to exploit Abdullah bin Ub who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Holy Prophet since his arrival at Al-Madinah. He was an influential chief of Al-Madinah and the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aus and Khazraj clan became Muslims and acknowledged the Holy Prophet as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end.

Therefore the Quraish wrote to him, "As you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your city otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls.

This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Holy Prophet took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs.

The Quraish got another opportunity to hold out a threat. When Sa'ad bin Mu'az, another chief of Al-Madinah, went to Makkah to perform Umrah, Abu Jahl interrupted him at the very door of the Ka`bah, saying, "Do you think we will let you perform Umrah in peace when you give shelter and help to renegades from us? Had you not been a guest of Ummayyah bin Khalaf, you would not have gone alive from here. " Sa'ad replied, "By Allah, if you prevent me from this, I will retaliate in a worse manner and block your route near Al-Madinah.

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Historical Background. . . . . .

This incident virtually led to a declaration from the people of Makkah that they would prevent the Muslims from a pilgrimage to the Ka`bah, and from the people of Al-Madinah that as a retaliation they would block their trade route to Syria against the

opponents of Islam. As a matter of fact there was no other alternative for the Muslims than to keep a strong hold on this route so as to force the Quraish, and the other clans, whose interests were vitally bound with this route, to reconsider their inimical and antagonistic attitude towards them. That is why the Holy Prophet attached the greatest importance to this problem. As soon as he was free from making the preliminary arrangements for organizing the newly formed Muslim Community and settling peace terms with the neighboring Jewish habitations, he adopted two measures in this connection.

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at east to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which vas a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Bani Damrah, who lived near Yanbu` and Zawal Ushairah. In 2 A. H. Bani Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbors and allies of Bani Damrah. Then ii so happened that quite a large number of these people were converted to Islam as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

Secondly, he successively sent small bands of his men on this route to serve as a warning to the Quraish, and himself accompanied some of them. In the first year of Hijrah, four expeditions were sent there, that is, the expedition under Hamzah, the expedition under Ubaidah bin Harith, the expedition under Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and the Al-Abwa' expedition under the Holy Prophet himself. In the first month of the second year two more incursions were made on the same route. These are known as Buwat Expedition and Zawal Ushairah Expedition. Two things about all these expeditions are noteworthy. First, no blood was shed and no caravans were plundered in any of these expeditions. This proves that the real object of these expeditions was to show to the Quraish which way the wind was blowing. Secondly, not a single man from the people of Al-Madinah was sent by the Holy. Prophet on any of these incursions. All the bands consisted purely of the immigrants from Makkah so that the conflict should remain between the people of the Quraish themselves and should not further spread by the involvement of other clans. On the other side, the Quraish of Makkah tried to involve others also in the conflict. When they sent bands towards Al-Madinah, they did not hesitate to plunder the people. For instance, an expedition under the leadership of Kurz bin Jabir al-Fihrl plundered the cattle of the people of Al-Madinah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

This was the state of affairs when, in Sha'aban, 2 A. H. (February or March, 623 A. D.) a big trade caravan of the Quraish, carrying goods worth $50, 000 or so, with only a guard of thirty to forty men, on its way back from Syria to Makkah, reached the territory from where it could be easily attacked from Al-Madinah. As the caravan was carrying trade goods worth thousands of pounds, and was scantily guarded, naturally Abu Sufyan, who was in charge of it, from his Past experience feared an attach from the

Muslims. Accordingly, as soon as he entered the dangerous territory, he dispatched a camel rider to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help.

When the rider reached Makkah, he, following an old custom of Arabia, tore open the ears of his camel, cut open his nose and overturned the saddle. Then rending his shirt from front and behind, he began to cry aloud at the top of his voice, "O people of Quraish dispatch help to protect your caravan from Syria under the charge of Abu Sufyan, for Muhammad with his followers is in pursuit of it; otherwise I don't think you will ever get your goods. Run, run for help.

This caused great excitement and anger in the whole of Makkah and all the big chiefs of the Quraish got ready for war.

An army, consisting of 600 armored soldiers and cavalry of 100 riders with great pomp and show marched out for a fight. They intended not only to rescue the caravan but also to put to an end, once for all, the new menace from the Muslims who had consolidated themselves at Al-Madinah. They wanted to crush that rising power and overawe the clans surrounding the route so as to make it absolutely secure for future trade.

Now the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour has come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islamic Movement would become lifeless for ever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For if the Quraish invaded Al-Madinah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim Community was still very shaky because the immigrants Muhajirin had not been able to stabilize their economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Al-Madinah; their helpers, the Ansaar had not yet been tried; and the neighboring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and mushriks in Al-Madinah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraish and had all their religious sympathies with them.

The Holy Prophet, therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favorable to the Muslims.

The second possibility was that they would not invade Al-Madinah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslims remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely. Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraish, start hostilities against them, and the Jews, the hypocrites and the mushriks of Al-Madinah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honor but make it difficult for them even to live there. The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honor.

A careful study of the situation led the Holy Prophet to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and thus only could he show whether the Muslim Community had the right to survive or was doomed to perish.

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the Muhajirin and the Ansaar together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, "Allah has promised that you will confront one of the two, the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraish marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack! " A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Holy Prophet who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdad bin 'Amr, a Muhajir, stood up and said, "0 Messenger of Allah! Please march to the side to which your Lord commands you; we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites, 'Go and let you and your Lord fight we will wait'. In contrast to them we say, 'Let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath'. " Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the Ansaar who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islam.

As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfill their promise of fighting for the cause of Islam, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Sa'ad bin Mu'az, an Ansaar, stood up and said, "Sir, it appears that you are putting the question to us. " When the Holy Prophet said, "Yes", the Ansaar replied, "We have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the Truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, 0 Messenger of Allah, do whatever you intend to do. We swear by Allah Who has sent you with the Truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of Allah our behavior will gladden your heart. So, trusting in Allah's blessing, take us to the battlefield.

After these speeches it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraish and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 Muhajirs, 62 from Aus and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armors.

It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islam, the majority of those who had joined the expedition, were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death.

Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islam, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Holy Prophet

and the true Believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life: therefore they marched straight to the south-west, where-from the army of the Quraish was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the north-westerly direction and not the south-westerly one.
(continued. . .)
(continuing. . . 2) : Historical Background. . . . . .
The two parties met in combat at Badr on the seventeenth of Ramadan. When the two armies confronted each other and the Holy Prophet noticed that the Quraish army outnumbered the Muslims by three to one and was much better equipped, he raised his hands up in supplication and made this earnest prayer with great humility: "0 Allah! Here are the Quraish proud of their war material: they have come to prove that Thy Messenger is false. 0 Allah! now send that succor (aid) that Thou hast promised to give me. 0 Allah! If this little army of Thy servants is destroyed, then there will be left none in the land to worship Thee. " In this combat the emigrants from Makkah were put to the hardest test for they had to fight against their own near and dear relatives and put to the sword their fathers, their sons, their paternal and maternal uncles and their brothers.
It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted the Truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the Ansaar were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraish and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to give fight to them and to sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them.
This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand inhabitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the Truth of Islam so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake. So Allah accepted the self-sacrifices of the Muhajirin and the Ansaar because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His succor.
The proud, well-armed Quraish were routed by these ill-equipped devotees of Islam. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islam, were killed in this Battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islam a power to be reckoned with. A Western research scholar says that before the Battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and a state but after the Battle it became the state religion, nay, the state itself.

Topics of Discussion

It is this great Battle that has been reviewed in this Surah. But let it be noted that in some respects this review is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by the worldly commanders after a great victory Instead of gloating over the victory, the

moral weaknesses that had come to the surface in that expedition have been pointed out so that the Muslims should try their best to reform themselves.
It has been impressed upon them that the victory was due to the succor of Allah rather - than to their own valor and bravery so that the Muslims should learn to rely on Him and obey Allah and His Messenger alone. The moral lesson of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained. Then the Surah addresses the mushriks, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prisoners of this war in a very impressive manner that should teach them a good lesson. It also gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have bean told not to regard these as their right but as a bounty from Allah. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which Allah sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy.
Then it also gives normal instructions concerning the laws of peace and war for these were urgently needed to be explained at the stage which the Islamic Movement had entered. It enjoined that the Muslims should refrain from ways of "ignorance" in peace and war and thus should establish their moral superiority in the world. It also meant, to demonstrate to the world in actual practical life the morality which it had been preaching to the world from the very beginning of Islam and had been enjoining that practical life should be based on the same. It also states some articles of the Islamic Constitution which help differentiate the status of the Muslims living within the limits of Dar-ul-Islam (the Abode of Islam) from that of the Muslims living beyond its limits.

9. Tauba:

Name
This Surah is known by two names AT-TAUBAH and AL-BARA'AT. It is called AT-TAUBAH because it enunciates the nature of taubah (repentance) and mentions the conditions of its acceptance. (vv. 102. 118). The second name BARA' AT (Release) is taken from the first word of the Surah.
Why Omission of Bismillah
This is the only Surah of the Qur'an to which Bismillah is not prefixed. Though the commentators have given different reasons for this, the correct one that which has been given by Imam Razi: namely, this is because the Holy Prophet himself did not dictate it at the beginning of the Surah. Therefore the Companions did not prefix it and their successors followed them. , This is a further proof of the fact that utmost care has been taken to keep the Qur'an intact so that it should remain in its complete and original form.
Discourses and Periods of Revelation
This Surah comprises three discourses The first discourse (vv. 1-37), was revealed in Zil-Qa'adah A. H. 9 or there-about. As the importance of the subject of the discourse required its declaration on the occasion of Hajj the Holy Prophet dispatched Hadrat Ali to follow Hadrat Abu Bakr, who had already left for Makkah as leader of the Pilgrims to

the Ka'abah. He instructed Hadrat AIi to deliver the discourse before the representatives of the different clans of Arabia so as to inform them of the new policy towards the mushriks.

The second discourse (vv. , 38-72) was sent down in Rajab A. H. 9 or a little before this, when the Holy Prophet was engaged in making preparations for the Campaign, of Tabuk. In this discourse, the Believers were urged to take active part in jihad, and the shirkers were severely rebuked for holding back their wealth and for hesitation to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah because of their hypocrisy, weak faith or negligence.

The third discourse (vv. 73-I 29) was revealed on his return from the Campaign of Tabuk. There are some pieces in this discourse that were sent down on different occasions during the same period and were afterwards consolidated by the Holy Prophet into the Surah in accordance with inspiration from Allah. But this caused no interruption in its continuity because they dealt with the same subject and formed part of the same series of events. This discourse warns the hypocrites of their evil deeds and rebukes those Believers who had stayed behind in the Campaign of Tabuk. Then after taking them to task, Allah pardons those true Believers who had not taken part in the Jihad in the Way of Allah for one reason or the other. Chronologically, the first discourse should have come last; but being the most important of the three in regard to its subject-matter, it was placed first in the order of compilation.

Historical Background

Now let us consider the historical background of the Surah. The series of events that have been discussed in this Surah took place after the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah. By that time, one-third of Arabia had come under the sway of Islam which had established itself as a powerful, well organized and civilized Islamic State. This Treaty afforded further opportunities to Islam to spread its influence in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere created by it. a After this Treaty, two events took place, which led to very important results:

Conquest of Arabia

The first was the Conquest of Arabia. The Holy Prophet was able to send missions among different clans for the propagation of Islam. The result was that during the short period of two years, it became such a great power that it made the old order of ignorance' feel helpless before it. So much so that the zealous elements from among the Quraish were so exasperated that they broke the Treaty in order to encounter Islam in a decisive combat. But the Holy Prophet took prompt action after the breach so as not to allow them any opportunity to gather enough force for this. He made a sudden invasion on Makkah in the month of Ramadan in A. H. 8 and conquered it. Though this conquest broke the backbone of the order of ignorance, it made still another attack on Islam in the battle-field of Hunain, which proved to be its death-knell. The clans of Hawazin Thaqif, Naur, Jushm and others gathered their entire forces in the battle field in order to crush the reformative Revolution, but they utterly failed in their evil designs. The defeat of 'ignorance' at Hunain paved the way for making the whole of Arabia the 'Abode of

Islam' (Dar-ul-Islam). The result was that hardly a year had Passed after the Battle of Hunain, when the major portion of Arabia came within the fold of Islam and only a few upholders of the old order remained scattered over some corners of the country.

The second event that contributed towards making Islam a formidable power was the Campaign of Tabuk, which was necessitated by the provocative activities of the Christians living within or near the boundaries of the Roman Empire to the north of Arabia. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet, with an army of thirty thousand marched boldly towards the Roman Empire but the Romans evaded the encounter. The result was that the power of the Holy Prophet and Islam increased manifold and deputations from all corners of Arabia began to wait upon him on his return from Tabuk in order to offer their allegiance to Islam and obedience to him. The Holy Qur'an has described this triumph in Surah An-Nisa: "When the succor of Allah came and victory was attained and you saw people entering the fold of Islam in large numbers. . .

Campaign to Tabuk

The Campaign to Tabuk was the result of conflict with the Roman Empire, that had started even before the conquest of Makkah. One of the missions sent after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah to different parts of Arabia visited the clans which lived in the northern areas adjacent to Syria. The majority of these people were Christians, who were under the influence of the Roman Empire. Contrary to all the principles of the commonly accepted international law, they killed fifteen members of the delegation near a place known as Zat-u-Talah (or Zat-i-Itlah). Only Ka'ab bin Umair Ghifari, the head of the delegation, succeeded in escaping and reporting the sad incident. Besides this, Shurahbil bin Amr, the Christian governor of Busra, who was directly under the Roman Caesar, had also put to death Harith bin Umair, the ambassador of the Holy Prophet, who had been sent to him on a similar minion.

These events convinced the Holy Prophet that a strong action should be taken in order to make the territory adjacent to the Roman Empire safe and secure for the Muslims. Accordingly, in the month of Jamadi-ul-Ula A. H. 8, he sent an army of three thousand towards the Syrian border. When this army reached near Ma'an, the Muslims learnt that Shurahbil was marching with an army of one hundred thousand to fight-with them and that the Caesar, who himself was at Hims, had sent another army consisting of one hundred thousand soldiers under his brother Theodore. But in spite of such fearful news, the brave small band of the Muslims marched on fearlessly and encountered the big army of Shurahbil at Mu'tah. And the result of the encounter in which the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds (the ratio of the two armies was 1: 33), as very favorable, for the enemy utterly failed to defeat them. This proved very helpful for the propagation of Islam. As a result, those Arabs who were living in a state of semi. independence in Syria and near Syria and the clans of Najd near Iraq, who were under the influence of the Iranian Empire, turned towards Islam and embraced it in thousands. For example, the people of Bani Sulaim (whose chief was Abbas bin Mirdas Sulaimi), Ashja'a, Ghatafan, Zubyan, Fazarah, etc. , came into the fold of Islam at the same time. Above all, Farvah bin 'Amral Juzami, who was the commander of the Arab armies of

the Roman Empire, embraced Islam during that time, and underwent the trial of his Faith in a way that filled the whole territory with wonder. When the Caesar came to know that Farvah had embraced Islam, he ordered that he should be arrested and brought to his court. Then the Caesar said to him, "You will have to choose one of the two things. Either give up your Islam and win your liberty and your former rank, or remain a Muslim and face death. " He calmly chose Islam and sacrificed his life in the way of the Truth.

No wonder that such events as these made the Caesar realize the nature of the danger that was threatening his Empire from Arabia. Accordingly, in 9 A. H. he began to make military preparations to avenge the insult he had suffered at Mu'tah. The Ghassanis and other Arab chiefs also began to muster armies under him. When the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well-informed even of the minutest things that could affect the Islamic Movement favorably or adversely, came to know of these preparations, he at once understood their meaning.

Therefore, without the least hesitation he decided to fight against the great power of the Caesar. He knew that the show of the slightest weakness would result in the utter failure of the Movement which was facing three great dangers at that time.

Firstly the dying power of 'ignorance' that had almost been crushed in the battle-field of Hunain might revive again.

Secondly, the Hypocrites of Al: Madinah, who were always on the look-out for such an opportunity, might make full use of this to do the greatest possible harm to it. For they had already made preparations for this and had, through a monk called Abu Amir, sent secret messages of their evil designs to the Christian king of Ghassan and the Caesar himself. Besides this, they had also built a mosque near Al-Madinah for holding secret meetings for this purpose.

The third danger was of an attack by the Caesar himself, who had already defeated Iran, the other great power of that period, and filled with awe the adjacent territories.

It is obvious that if all these three elements had been given an opportunity of taking a concerted action against the Muslims, Islam would have lost the fight it had almost won. That is why in this case the Holy Prophet made an open declaration for making preparations for the Campaign against the Roman Empire, which was one of the two greatest empires of the world of that period.

The declaration was made though all the apparent circumstances were against such a decision: for there was famine in the country and the long awaited crops were about to ripen: the burning heat of the scorching summer season of Arabia was at its height and there was not enough money for preparations in general, and for equipment and conveyance in particular.

But in spite of these handicaps, when the Messenger of Allah realized the urgency of the occasion, he took this step which was to decide whether the Mission of the Truth was going to survive or perish.

The very fact that he made an open declaration for making preparations for such a campaign to Syria against the Roman Empire showed how important it was, for this was

contrary to his previous practice. Usually he took every precaution not to reveal beforehand the direction to which he was going nor the name of the enemy whom he was going to attack; nay, he did not move out of Al-Madinah even in the direction of the campaign.

All the parties in Arabia fully realized the grave consequences of this critical decision. The remnants of the lovers of the old order of 'ignorance' were anxiously waiting for the result of the Campaign, for they had pinned all their hopes on the defeat of Islam by the Romans. The 'hypocrites' also considered it to be their last chance of crushing the power of Islam by internal rebellion, if the Muslims suffered a defeat in Syria. They had, therefore, made full use of the Mosque built by them for hatching plots and had employed all their devices to render the Campaign a failure. On the other side, the true Believers also realized fully that the fate of the Movement for which they had been exerting their utmost for the last 22 years was now hanging in the balance. If they showed courage on that critical occasion, the doors of the whole outer world would be thrown open for the Movement to spread. But if they showed weakness or cowardice, then all the work they had done in Arabia would -end in smoke. That is why these lovers of Islam began to make enthusiastic preparations for the Campaign.

Everyone of them tried to surpass the other in making contributions for the provision of equipment for it. Hadrat Uthman and Hadrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf presented large sums of money for this purpose. Hadrat Umar contributed half of the earnings of his life and Hadrat Abu Bakr the entire earnings of his life. The indigent Companions did not lag behind and presented whatever they could earn by the sweat of their labor and the women parted with their ornaments. Thousands of volunteers, who were filled with the desire of sacrificing their lives for Islam, came to the Holy Prophet and requested that arrangements for weapons and conveyance be made for them so that they should join the expedition. Those who could not be provided with these shed tears of sorrow; the scene was so pathetic that it made the Holy Prophet sad because of his inability to arm them.

In short, the occasion became the touchstone for discriminating a true believer from a hypocrite. For, to lag behind in the Campaign meant that the very relationship of a person to Islam was doubtful. Accordingly, whenever a person lagged behind during the journey to Tabuk, the Holy Prophet, on being informed, would spontaneously say, "Leave him alone. If there be any good in him, Allah will again join him with you, and if there be no good in him, then thank Allah that He relieved you of his evil company".

In short, the Holy Prophet marched out towards Syria in Rajab A. H. 9, with thirty thousand fighters for the cause of Islam. The conditions in which the expedition was undertaken may be judged from the fact that the number of camels with them was so small that many of them were obliged to walk on foot and to wait for their turns for several had to ride at a time on each camel. To add to this, there was the burning heat of the desert and the acute shortage of water. But they were richly rewarded for their firm resolve and sincere adherence to the cause and for their perseverance in the face of those great difficulties and obstacles.

When they arrived at Tabuk, they learnt that the Caesar and his allies had withdrawn their troops from the frontier and there was no enemy to fight with. Thus they won a moral victory that increased their prestige manifold and, that too, without shedding a drop of blood.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the general impression given by the {Western} historians of the campaigns of the Holy Prophet about the Campaign of Tabuk is not correct. {The qualification "Western" in the previous parentheses was added by Dar El Hadith to Al Mawdudi's text. } They relate the event in a way as if the news of the mustering of the Roman armies near the Arabian frontier was itself false. The fact is that the Caesar had begun to muster his armies, but the Holy Prophet forestalled him and arrived on the scene before he could make full preparations for the invasion. Therefore, believing that "discretion is the better part of valor, " he withdrew his armies from the frontier. For he had not forgotten that the three thousand fighters for the cause of Islam had rendered helpless his army one hundred thousand strong at Mu'tah. He could not, therefore, even with an army of two hundred thousand, dare to fight against an army of thirty thousand, and that, too, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet himself.

When the Holy Prophet found that the Caesar had withdrawn his forces from the frontier, he considered the question whether it would be worthwhile to march into the Syrian territory or to halt at Tabuk and turn his moral victory to political and stratigical advantage. He decided on the latter course and made a halt for twenty days at Tabuk.

During this time, he brought pressure on the small states that lay between the Roman Empire and the Islamic State and were at that time under the influence of the Romans, and subdued and made them the tributaries of the Islamic State.

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Campaign to Tabuk. . . . . .

For instance, some Christian chiefs Ukaidir bin Abdul Malik Kindi of Dumatul Jaiidal, Yuhanna bin D'obah of Ailah, and the chiefs of Maqna, Jarba' and Azruh also submitted and agreed to pay Jizyah to the Islamic State of Al-Madinah. As a result of this, the boundaries of the Islamic State were extended right up to the Roman Empire, and the majority of the Arab clans, who were being used by the Caesar against Arabia, became the allies of the Muslims against the Romans.

Above all, this moral victory of Tabuk afforded a golden opportunity to the Muslims to strengthen their hold on Arabia before entering into a long conflict with the Romans. For it broke the back of those who had still been expecting that the old order of 'ignorance' might revive in the near future, whether they were the open upholders of shirk or the hypocrites who were hiding their shirk under the garb of Islam. The majority of such people were compelled by the force of circumstances to enter into the fold of Islam and, at least, make it possible for their descendants to become true Muslims. After this a mere impotent minority of the upholders of the old order was left in the field, but it could not stand in the way of the Islamic Revolution for the perfection of which Allah had sent His Messenger.

Problems of the Period

If we keep in view the preceding background, we can easily find out the problems that were confronting the Community at that time. They were: (1) to make the whole of Arabia a perfect Dar-ul-Islam, (2) to extend the influence of Islam to the adjoining countries,
(3) to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, and (4) to prepare the Muslims for Jihad against the non-Muslim world.

Now that the administration of the whole of Arabia had come in the hands of the Believers, and all the opposing powers had become helpless, it was necessary to make a clear declaration of that policy which was to be adopted to make her a perfect Dar-ul-Islam Therefore the following measures were adopted.

A clear declaration was made that all the treaties with the mushriks were abolished and the Muslims would be released from the treaty obligations with them after a respite of four months. (vv. 1-3). This declaration was necessary for uprooting completely the system of life based on shirk and to make Arabia exclusively the center of Islam so that it should not in any way interfere with the spirit of Islam nor become an internal danger for it.

A decree was issued that the guardianship of the Kaabah, which held central position in all the affairs of Arabia, should be wrested from the mushriks and placed permanently in the hands of the Believers, (vv. 12-18) that all the customs and practices of the shirk of the era of 'ignorance' should be forcibly abolished: that the mushriks should not be allowed even to come near the "House" (v. 28). This was to eradicate every trace of shirk from the "House" that was dedicated exclusively to the worship of Allah. The evil practice of Nasi, by which they used to tamper with the sacred months in the days of 'ignorance', was forbidden as an act of kufr (v. 37). This was also to serve as an example to the Muslims for eradicating every vestige of the customs of ignorance from the life of Arabia (and afterwards from the lives of the Muslims everywhere). In order to enable the Muslims to extend the influence of Islam outside Arabia, they were enjoined to crush with sword the non-Muslim powers and to force them to accept the sovereignty of the Islamic State. As the great Roman and Iranian Empires were the biggest hindrances in the way, a conflict with them was inevitable. The object of Jihad was not to coerce them to accept Islam they were free to accept or not to accept it-but to prevent them from thrusting forcibly their deviations upon others and the coming generations. The Muslims were enjoined to tolerate their misguidance only to the extent that they might have the freedom to remain misguided, if they chose to be so, provided that they paid Jizyah (v. 29) as a sign of their subjugation to the Islamic State.

The third important problem was to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, who had hitherto been tolerated in spite of their flagrant crimes. Now that there was practically no pressure upon them from outside, the Muslims were enjoined to treat them openly as disbelievers (v. 73). Accordingly, the Holy Prophet set on fire the house of Swailim, where the hypocrites used to gather for consultations in order to dissuade the people from joining the expedition to Tabuk. Likewise on his return from Tabuk, he ordered to

pull down and burn the 'Mosque' that had been built to serve as a cover for the hypocrites for hatching plots against the true Believers.
In order to prepare the Muslims for Jihad against the whole non-Muslim world, it was necessary to cure them even of that slight weakness of faith from which they were still suffering. For there could be no greater internal danger to the Islamic Community than the weakness of faith, especially where it was going to engage itself single-handed in a' conflict with the whole non-Muslim world. That is why those people who had lagged behind in the Campaign to Tabuk or had shown the least negligence were severely taken to task, and were considered as hypocrites if they had no plausible excuse for not fulfilling that obligation. Moreover, a clear declaration was made that in future the sole criterion of a Muslim's faith shall be the exertions he makes for the uplift of the Word of Allah and the role he plays in the conflict between Islam and kufr. Therefore, if anyone will show any hesitation in sacrificing his life, money, time and energies, his faith shall not be regarded as genuine. (vv. 81-96). If the above-mentioned important points are kept in view during the study of this Surah, it will facilitate the understanding of its contents.

10. Yunus:

Name
The Surah takes its name from V. 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet Yunus (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Surah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.
Period of Revelation
We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Surah itself, that the whole of this Surah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion, that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madinah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Surah belongs to the Makkan period.
Time of Revelation
We have no tradition in regard to the time of it's revelation, but its subject matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that they could not tolerate even the presence of the Holy Prophet and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet. This indicates that the last stage of the Prophet's life among the people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Surah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the Movement at Makkah. Another

thing that determines more specifically the order of the Surahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about Hijrat (Emigration) from Makkah. As this Surah does not contain any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those surahs which contain it. Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Surahs VI and VII.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the Message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this: "The people consider it a strange thing that this Message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or soothe-saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it, is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world, there will be another life in the Next World, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Masters or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger is presenting before you, are "realities" in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them; if you accept these, you will have a very blessed end; otherwise join shall meet with evil consequences. "

11. Huud:

Name

This Surah has been named after Prophet Huud whose story has been related in vv. 50-60.

Period of Revelation

If we consider its theme deeply, we come to the conclusion that it was revealed during the same period as Surah Yunus and most probably followed it immediately.

Subject

The Surah deals with the same subject as Surah Yunus, that is, invitation to the Message, admonition and warning, with this difference that the warning is sterner. This is also supported by a Tradition: It is related that after its revelation, once Hadrat Abu Bakr said to the Holy Prophet, "Of late I have been noticing that you are growing older and older. What is the cause of it? " The Holy Prophet replied, "Surah Huud and the like Surahs have made me old. " This shows that it was a very hard time for the Holy Prophet and these stern warnings added greatly to his anxieties that were caused by the persecution from the Quraish, who were doing their worst to crush down the Message of Islam. For it was obvious to the Holy Prophet that the last limit of the respite given by Allah was approaching nearer and nearer and he was afraid lest the term of the respite should expire and his people be seized by the torment. The invitation is this:

Obey the Messenger of Allah; discard shirk, and worship Allah and Allah alone: establish the entire system of your life on the belief that you shall be called to account in the Hereafter.
The admonition is this: Remember that those people who put their faith in the outward appearance of this worldly life and rejected the Message of the Prophets met with dire consequences. Therefore you should consider it seriously whether you should follow the same way that history has proved to be the path to ruin.
The warning is this: You should not be deluded by the delay in the coming of the punishment: it is because of the respite that Allah has granted you by His grace so that you might mend your ways: if you do not make use of this opportunity, you shall be inflicted with an inevitable punishment that will destroy you all except the Believers.
Instead of addressing the people directly, the Qur'an has used the stories of the people of Noah, Huud, Saalih, Lot, Shu`aib and Moses to achieve the above mentioned objects. What is most prominent in their stories is that when Allah passes His judgment on the people, He does not spare anyone whatsoever, even if he be the nearest relative of the Prophet of the time. Only that one is rescued who had believed in the Prophet, and none else, not even his own son or wife. More than that: the Faith demands from each and every Believer that he should totally forget his relationships when that judgment comes and remember only the relationship of the Faith. For it is against the spirit of Islam to show any regard whatsoever for the relationships of blood and race. And the Muslims demonstrated these teachings practically in the Battle of Badr, four years after the revelation of this Surah.

12. Yusuf:

When and Why Revealed?
The subject matter of this Surah indicates that it was revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah, when the Quraish were considering the question of killing or exiling or imprisoning him. At that time some of the unbelievers put this question (probably at the instigation of the Jews) to test him : "Why did the Israelites go to Egypt? " This question was asked because they knew that their story was not known to the Arabs for there was no mention of it whatever in their traditions and the Holy Prophet had never even referred to it before. Therefore they expected that he would not be able to give any satisfactory answer to this question or would first evade it, and afterwards try to inquire about it from some Jew, and thus he would be totally exposed. But, contrary to their expectations, the tables were turned on them, for Allah revealed the whole story of Prophet Joseph then and there, and the Holy Prophet recited it on the spot. This put the Quraish in a very awkward position because it not only foiled their scheme but also administered a warning to them by aptly applying it to their case, as if to say, "As you are behaving towards this Prophet, exactly in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph behaved towards him; so you shall meet with the same end. "
Objects of Revelation

From the above it is clear that this Surah was sent down for two objects: The first object was to give the proof of the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that too, the one demanded by the opponents themselves so as to prove conclusively that his knowledge was not based on mere hearsay, but was gained through Revelation. This aspect has been stated explicitly in its introductory verses and explained plainly in its concluding portion. The second object was to apply it to the Quraish and warn them that ultimately the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet would end in his victory over them. As they were then persecuting their brother, the Holy Prophet, in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph had treated him. The Quraish were told indirectly that they would also fail in their evil designs just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had failed in his case, even after casting him into the well. This is because none has the power to defeat the Divine will. And just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had to humble themselves before him, so one day the Quraish shall have to beg forgiveness from their brother whom they were then trying to crush down. This, too, has been made quite plain in v. 7: "Indeed there are signs in this story of Joseph and his brothers for these inquirers from among the Quraish. "
The fact is that by applying this story to the conflict, the Qur'an had made a bold and clear prophecy, which was fulfilled literally by the events that happened in the succeeding ten years. Hardly two years had passed after its revelation, when the Quraish conspired to kill the Holy Prophet like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, and he had to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah, where he gained the same kind of power as Prophet Joseph had gained in Egypt. Again, in the end the Quraish had to humble themselves before him just like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, when they humbly requested, "Show mercy to us for Allah rewards richly those who show mercy" (V. 88), and Prophet Joseph generously forgave them, (though he had complete power to wreak vengeance on them,) saying, " today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you: He is the greatest of all those who forgive" (V. 92). The same story of mercy was repeated, when after the conquest of Makkah, the crest fallen Quraish stood meekly before the Holy Prophet, who had full power to wreak his vengeance on them for each and every cruelty committed by them. But instead, he merely asked them, "What treatment do you expect from me now? " They replied, "You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother. " At this, he very generously forgave them, saying, "I will give the same answer to your request that Joseph gave to his brothers: '. . ,. today, no penalty shall be inflicted on you: you are forgiven. "
Topics of Discussion
Moreover, the Qur'an does not relate this story as a mere narrative but uses it, as usual, for the propagation of the Message in the following ways:
Throughout the narrative the Qur'an has made it clear that the Faith of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Allah's peace be upon them all) was the same as that of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and they invited the people to the same Message to which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was inviting them.

Then it places the characters of Prophet Jacob and Prophet Joseph side by side with the characters of the brothers of Joseph, the members of the trade caravan, the court dignitary; Al Aziz of Egypt and his wife, the "ladies" of Egypt and the rulers of Egypt and poses a silent question to the reader, as if to say, "Contrast the former characters molded by Islam on the bedrock of the worship of Allah and accountability in the Hereafter with the latter molded by kufr and "ignorance" on the worship of the world and disregard of Allah and the Hereafter, and decide for yourselves which of these two patterns you would choose. "

The Qur'an has used this story to bring forth another truth: whatever Allah wills, He fulfills it anyhow, and man can never defeat His plan with his counter-plans nor prevent it from happening nor change it in any way whatever. Nay, it often so happens that man adopts some measure to fulfill his own design and believes that he has done that very thing which would fulfill his design, but in the end he finds to his dismay that he had done something which was against his own and conducive to the Divine purpose. When the brothers of Prophet Joseph cast him into the well, they believed that they had once for all got rid of the obstacle in their way but in fact, they had paved the way for the Divine purpose of making him the ruler of Egypt, before whom they would have to humble themselves in the end. Likewise, the wife of Aziz had sent Prophet Joseph to the prison, floating over the thought that she had wreaked her vengeance on him, but, in fact, she had provided for him the opportunity) for becoming the ruler of Egypt and for putting herself to the shame of confessing her own sin publicly.

And these are not the solitary instances which prove the truth that even if the whole world united to bring about the down fall of the one whom Allah willed to raise high, it could not succeed. Nay, the very "sure and effective" measures that were adopted by the brothers to degrade Joseph were used by Allah for the success of Joseph and for the humiliation and disgrace of his brothers. On the other hand, if Allah willed the fall of one, no measure, howsoever effective, could raise him high : nay, it helped to bring about his fall and the disgrace of those who adopted them.

Moreover, the story contains other lessons for those who intend to follow the way of Allah. The first lesson it teaches is that one should remain within the limits, prescribed by the Divine Law, in one's aims and objects and measures, for success and failure are entirely in the hands of Allah. Therefore if one adopts pure aims and lawful measures but fails, at least one will escape ignominy and disgrace. On the other hand, the one who adopts an impure aim and unlawful measures to achieve it, shall not only inevitably meet with ignominy and disgrace in the Hereafter, but also runs the risk of ignominy and disgrace in this world.

The second lesson it teaches is that those who exert for the cause of truth and righteousness and put their trust in Allah and entrust all their affairs to Him, get consolation and comfort from Him, for this helps them face their opponents with confidence and courage and they do not lose heart, when they encounter the apparently terrifying measures of the powerful enemies. They will persevere in their task without fear and leave the results to Allah.

But the greatest lesson this story teaches is that if the Believer possesses true Islamic character and is endowed with wisdom, he can conquer a whole country with the strength of his character alone. The marvelous example of Prophet Joseph teaches us that a man of high and pure character comes out successful even under the most adverse circumstances. When Prophet Joseph went to Egypt, he was only a lad of seventeen years, a foreigner, all alone and without any provisions; nay, he had been sold there as a slave. And the horrible condition of the slaves during that period is known to every student of history. Then he was charged with a heinous moral Crime and sent to prison for an indefinite term. But throughout this period of affliction, he evinced the highest moral qualities which raised him to the highest rank in the country.

Historical and Geographical Background

The following historical and geographical details will help understand the story: Prophet Joseph was a son of Prophet Jacob and a grandson of Prophet Isaac and a great grandson of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them all). The Bible says (and the allusions in the Qur'an also confirm this) that Prophet Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. Prophet Joseph and his younger brother Benjamin were from one wife and the other ten from the other wives. Prophet Jacob had settled at Hebron (Palestine) where his father Prophet Isaac and before him Prophet Abraham lived and owned a piece of land at Shechem as well.

According to the research scholars of the Bible, Prophet Joseph was born in or about 906 B. C. and the incident with which this story begins happened in or about 890 B. C. He was seventeen when he saw the dream and was thrown into the well. This well was near Dothan to the north of Shechem according to Biblical and Talmudic traditions, and the caravan, which took him out of the well, was coming from Gilead (Trans-Jordan), and was on its way to Egypt. At that time Fifteenth Dynasty ruled over Egypt, whose rulers are known in history as the Hyksos kings. They belonged to the Arab race, but had migrated from Palestine and Syria to Egypt in or about 2000 B. C. and taken possession of the country. The Arab historians and the commentators of the Qur'an have given them the name of Amaliq (the Amalekites), and this has been corroborated by the recent researches made by the Egyptologists. They were foreign invaders who had got the opportunity of establishing their kingdom because of the internal feuds in the country. That is why there was no prejudice in the way of Prophet Joseph's ascendancy to power and in the subsequent settlement of the Children of Israel in the most fertile region of Egypt. They could gain that power and influence which they did, because they belonged to the same race as the foreign rulers of Egypt.

The Hyksos ruled over Egypt up to the end of the fifteenth century B. C. , and practically all the powers remained in the hands of the Israelites. The Qur'an has made a reference to this in v. 20 of Al-Ma'idah:. . . . . He raised Prophets among you and made you rulers. . . , Then there arose a great nationalist movement which overthrew the power of this dynasty and exiled 250, 000 or so of the Amalekites. As a result of this, a very bigoted dynasty of Copts came into power and uprooted everything connected with

the Amalekites. Then started that persecution of the Israelites which has been mentioned in connection with the story of Prophet Moses.
We also learn from the history of Egypt that the "Hyksos kings" did not acknowledge the gods of Egypt and, therefore, had imported their own gods from Syria, with a view to spreading their own religion in Egypt. This is the reason why the Qur'an has not called the king who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph by the title of "Pharaoh, " because this title was associated with the religion of the original people of Egypt and the Hyksos did not believe in it, but the Bible erroneously calls him "Pharaoh". It appears that the editors of the Bible had the misunderstanding that all the kings of Egypt were "Pharaohs. " The modern research scholars who have made a comparative study of the Bible and the Egyptian history are generally of the opinion that Apophis was the Hyksos king, who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph.
At that time Memphis was the capital of Egypt, whose ruins are still found on the Nile at a distance of 4 miles south of Cairo. When Prophet Joseph was taken there, he was 17 or 18 years old. He remained in the house of Aziz for three years and spent nine years in prison, and then became the ruler of the land at the age of thirty and ruled over Egypt independently for eighty years. In the ninth or tenth year of his rule he sent for his father, Prophet Jacob, to come from Palestine to Egypt with all the members of his family and, according to the Bible, settled them in the land of Goshen, where they lived up to the time of Prophet Moses. The Bible says that before his death, Prophet Joseph bound his kindred by an oath: "when you return from this country to the house of your forefathers you must take my bones out of this country with you. So he died a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him.
Though the story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Qur'an differs very much in its details from that given in the Bible and the Talmud, the Three generally agree in regard to its component parts. We shall explain the differences, when and where necessary, in our Explanatory Notes.

13. Ra'd:

Name
This Surah takes its name from the word (ar-Ra'd) (thunder) that occurs in v. 13. It is merely the symbolic name of the Surah and does not in any way mean that the Surah deals with the scientific problems connected with thunder.
Period of Revelation
The internal evidence (vv 27-31 and vv. 34-48) shows that this Surah was revealed in the last stage of the Mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah and during the same period in which Surahs Yunus, Huud and Al-A`raaf were sent down. The manner of speech indicates that a long time had passed since the Holy Prophet had been conveying the Message. On the one hand, his opponents had been contriving different devices to defeat him and his Mission, and, on the other, his followers had been expressing a desire that by showing a miracle the disbelievers might be brought to the Right Way. In answer, Allah impressed on the Believers that it is not His way to convert people by this

method and that they should not lose heart, if He is giving the enemies of the Truth a rope long enough to hang themselves. Otherwise, He is able to show such signs as may bring the dead out of their graves and make them speak (v. 31), but even then these obdurate people will invent an excuse to explain this away. All this decisive evidence clearly proves that this Surah was revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's Mission at Makkah.

Central Theme

The first verse enunciates the main theme of this Surah, that is, "The Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is the very Truth, but it is the fault of the people that they are rejecting it. " This is the pivot on which the whole Surah turns. This is why it has been shown over and over again in different ways that the basic components of the Message Tauhid, Resurrection and Prophet-hood-are a reality: therefore they should believe sincerely in these for their own moral and spiritual good. They have been warned that they shall incur their own ruin if they reject them, for kufr by itself is sheer folly and ignorance. Moreover, the aim of the Surah is not merely to satisfy the minds but also to appeal to the hearts to accept the Faith. Therefore it does not merely put forward logical arguments in support of the truth of the Message and against the people's wrong notions, but at appropriate intervals it makes frequent use of sympathetic and earnest appeals to win over their hearts by warning them of the consequences of kufr and by holding out the happy rewards of Faith so that the foolish people should give up their obduracy.

Besides this, the objections of the opponents have been answered without any mention of them, and those doubts which are proving a hindrance in the way of the Message or were being created by the opponents have been removed. At the same time, the Believers; who had been passing through long and hard ordeal and were feeling tired, and waiting anxiously for Allah's succor, have been comforted and filled with hope and courage.

14. Ibrahim:

Name

The Surah takes its name from v. 35 in which mention has been made of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). But it does not mean that it contains the life story of Prophet Abraham. The name is merely a symbol lid the names of many other surahs, i. e. , the Surah in which Abraham's mention has been made.

Period of Revelation

It appears from the tone of the Surah that it belongs to that group of the Surahs which were revealed during the last stage of the Makkan period. For instance, v. 13 ("The disbelievers warned their Messengers, 'you shall have to return to our community or we will assuredly expel you from our land'") clearly indicates that the persecution of the Muslims was at its worst at the time of the revelation of this Surah, and the people of Makkah were bent on expelling the Believers from there like the disbelievers of the former Prophets. That is why in v. 14 they have been warned, "We will destroy these

evil doers, " and the Believers have been comforted as were the believers before them, "and after them settle you in the land" Likewise the stern warning contained in the concluding portion (vv. 43-52 also confirms that the Surah relates to the last stage of the Makkan Period.

Central Theme and Purpose

This Surah is an admonition and a warning to the disbelievers who were rejecting the Message of the Holy Prophet and devising cunning schemes to defeat his Mission. But warning, reproof, censure and reproach dominate admonition. This is because a good deal of admonition had already been made in the preceding Surahs, but in spite of this their obduracy, enmity, antagonism, mischief, persecution etc. had rather increased.

15. Hijr:

Name

This Surah takes its name from v. 80.

Period of Revelation

It is clear from its topics and style that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Surah Ibrahim, for two things are quite prominent in its background. First, it appears from the repeated warnings in this Surah that in spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet had been propagating the Message for many years, his people in general had not shown any inclination towards its acceptance nay, they had become more and more obdurate and stubborn in their antagonism, enmity and ridicule with the passage of time. Secondly, by that time the Holy Prophet had begun to feel a little tired of making strenuous efforts to eradicate disbelief and opposition of his people. That is why Allah has consoled and comforted him over and over again by way of encouragement.

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the surah are : (a) warning to those who rejected his Message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and (b) comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet, it does not mean that this Surah does not contain admonition and instructions. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an never confines itself to mere warning; rebuke and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Surah contains brief arguments for Tauhid on the one hand, and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.

16. Nahl:

Name

The name, An-Nahl, of this Surah has been taken from v. 68. This is merely to distinguish it from other Surahs.

Period of Revelation

The following internal evidence shows that this Surah was revealed during the last Makkan stage of Prophet-hood:

-1. V. 41 clearly shows that persecution had forced
some Muslims to emigrate to Habash before the revelation of this Surah.

-2. It is evident from v. 106 that at that time the
persecution of the Muslims was at its height. Therefore a problem had arisen in regard to the utterance of a blasphemous word, without actual disbelief, under unbearable conditions. The problem was that if one did so how he should be treated.
-3. vv. 112-114 clearly refer to the end of seven year
famine that had struck Makkah some years after the appointment of the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger.
-4. There is a reference to V 116 of this Surah in VI:
-145, and v. 118 of this Surah contains a reference to VI: 146. This is a proof that both these Surahs (VI and XVI) were sent down in the same period. The general style of the Surah also supports the view that this was revealed during the last stage at Makkah.

Central Theme

All the topics of the Surah revolve round different aspects of the Message, ie. , refutation of shirk, proof of Tauhid, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the Message.

Topics of Discussion

The very first verse gives direct and strict warning to those who were rejecting the Message outright, as if to say, "Allah's decision has already been made concerning your rejection of the Message. Why are you then clamoring for hastening it? Why don't you make use of the respite that is being given to you! " And this was exactly what the disbelievers of Makkah needed at the time of the revelation of this Surah. For they challenged the Holy Prophet over and over again: "Why don't you bring that scourge with which you have been threatening us! For we have not only rejected your Message but have been openly opposing it for a long time. " Such a challenge had become a by-word with them, which they frequently repeated as a clear proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet.

Immediately after this warning they have been admonished to give up shirk, for this false creed was the main obstacle in the way of the Message. Then the following topics come over and over again, one after the other:

-1. Very convincing proofs of Tauhid and refutation of shirk have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.
-2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.
-3. Warnings have given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the Message.
-4. The moral changes which the Message of the Holy Prophet aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The mushriks have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to lip service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.

The Holy Prophet and his companions have been comforted and told about the attitude they should adopt in the face of antagonism and persecution by the disbelievers.

17. Bani Israel:

Name

This Surah takes its name (Bani Israil) from v. 4. But this name is merely a distinctive appellation like the names of many other surahs and not a descriptive title, and does not mean that "Bani Israil" is the theme of this Sarah.

Period of Revelation

The very first verse indicates that this Surah was revealed on the occasion of M`iraj (Ascension). According to the Traditions and books on the life of the Holy Prophet, this event happened one year before Hijrah. Thus, this Surah is one of those which were revealed in the last stage of Prophet-hood at Makkah.

Background

The Holy Prophet had been propagating Tauhid for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his Mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true Believers had formed themselves into a small community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success. Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj (two influential clans of Al-Madinah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Holy Prophet to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah and there gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam. These were the conditions when Mi`raj took place and on his return the Holy Prophet brought down the Message contained in this Surah.

Theme and Topics

This Surah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion. The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Qur'an; otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madinah have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned, "Take advantage of the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to you. If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment. "

As regards the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of Tauhid life-after-death and Prophet-hood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Qur'an is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine the doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic System of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the Manifesto of the intended Islamic state which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the sketch of the system on which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the outside world.
Besides these, the Holy Prophet has been instructed to stick firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, salat was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say, "This is the thing' which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way Incidentally, we learn from Traditions that Mi`raj was the first occasion on which the five daily Prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.

18. Kahf:

Name
This Surah takes its name from v. 9 in which the word (al-Kahf) occurs.
Period of Revelation
This is the first of those Surahs which were sent down in the third stage of Prophet-hood at Makkah. We have already divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages in the Introduction to Chapter VI. According to that division the third stage lasted from the fifth to the tenth year of Prophet-hood. What distinguishes this stage from the second and the fourth stages is this. During the second stage the Quraish mainly resorted to ridiculing, scoffing, threatening, tempting, raising objections and making false propaganda against the Holy Prophet and his followers in order to suppress the Islamic Movement. But during the third stage they employed the weapons of persecution, man handling and economic pressure for the same purpose. So much so that a large number of the Muslims had to emigrate from Arabia to Habash, and those who remained behind were besieged in Shi'ib Abi Talib along with the Holy Prophet and his family. To add to their misery, a complete social and economic boycott was applied against them. The only redeeming feature was that there were two personalities, Abu Talib and Hadrat Khadijah, whose personal influence had been conducive to the support of two great families of the Quraish. However, when in the tenth year of Prophet-hood these two persons died, the fourth stage began with such revere persecutions as forced the Holy Prophet and all his Companions to emigrate from Makkah.
It appears from the theme of the Surah that it was revealed at the beginning of the third stage when in spite of persecutions and opposition, migration to Habash had not yet

taken place. That is why the story of "Ashab-i-Kahf" (the Sleepers of the Cave) has been related to comfort and encourage the persecuted Muslims and to show them how the righteous people have been saving their Faith in the past.

Subject and Topics

This Surah was sent down in answer to the three questions which the mushriks of Makkah, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put to the Holy Prophet in order to test him. These were: (1) Who were "the Sleepers of' the Cave" ? (2) What is the real story of Khidr? and (3) What do you know about Zul-Qarnain? As these three questions and the stories involved concerned the history of the Christians and the Jews, and were unknown in Hijaz, a choice of these was made to test whether the Holy Prophet possessed any source of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen things. Allah, however, not only gave a complete answer to their questions but also employed the three stories to the disadvantage of the opponents of Islam in the conflict that was going on at that time at Makkah between Islam and un-belief

The questioners were told that "the Sleepers of the Cave" believed in the same doctrine of Tauhid which was being put forward in the Qur'an and that their condition was similar to the condition of the persecuted Muslims of Makkah. On the other hand, the persecutors of the Sleepers of the Cave had behaved in the same way towards them as the disbelievers of the Quraish were behaving towards the Muslims. Besides this, the Muslims have been taught that even if a Believer is persecuted by a cruel society, he should not bow down before falsehood but emigrate from the place all alone, if need be, with trust in God. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah were told that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave was a clear proof of the creed of the Hereafter, for this showed that Allah has the power to resurrect anyone He wills even after a long sleep of death as He did in case of the Sleepers of the Cave.

The story of the Sleepers of the Cave has also been used to warn the chiefs of Makkah who were persecuting the small newly formed Muslim Community. At the same time, the Holy Prophet has been instructed that he should in no case make a compromise with their persecutors nor should he consider them to be more important than his poor followers. On the other hand, those chiefs have been admonished that they should not be puffed up with the transitory life of pleasure they were then enjoying but should seek after those excellences which are permanent and eternal.

The story of Khidr and Moses has been related in such a way as to supply the answer to the question of the disbelievers and to give comfort to the Believers as well. The lesson contained in this story is this "You should have full faith in the wisdom of what is happening in the Divine Factory in accordance with the will of Allah. As the reality is hidden from you, you are at a loss to understand the wisdom of what is happening, and sometimes if it appears that things are going against you, you cry out, 'How and why has this happened'. The fact is that if the curtain be removed from the "unseen", you would yourselves come to know that what is happening here is for the best. Even if some times it appears that something is going against you, you will see that in the end it also produces some good results for you.

The same is true of the story of zul-Qarnain for it also admonishes the questioners, as if to say, "0 you vain chiefs of Makkah you should learn a lesson from zul-Qarnain. Though he was a great ruler, a great conqueror and the owner of great resources, yet he always surrendered to his Creator, whereas you are rebelling against Him even though you are insignificant chieftains in comparison with him. Besides this, though zul-Qarnain built one of the strongest walls for protection, yet his real trust was in Allah and not in the "wall". He believed that the wall could protect him against his enemies as long as it was the will of Allah and that there would be crack and holes in it, when it would be His will : whereas you who possess only insignificant fortified abodes and dwellings in comparison with him, consider yourselves to be permanently safe and secure against all sorts of calamities. "

While the Qur'an turned the tables on the questioners who had tried to "expose" the Holy Prophet, in the end of the Surah the same things have been reiterated that were stated at its beginning: "Tauhid and the Hereafter are absolutely true and real and for your own good you should accept these doctrines, mend your ways in accordance with them and live in this world with this conviction that you are accountable to Allah: otherwise you shall ruin your life and all your doings shall be set at naught. "

19. Maryam:

Name

It takes its name from v. 16.

Period of Revelation

It was revealed before the Migration to Habash. We learn from authentic Traditions that Hadrat Ja'afar recited vv. 1-40 of this Surah in the court of Negus when he called the migrants to his court.

Historical Background

We have already briefly referred to the conditions of that period in the introduction to Surah Al-Kahf. Here we shall give rather fuller details of the same conditions, which will be helpful in grasping the meaning of this Surah and the other Surahs of the period.

When the chiefs of the Quraish felt that they had failed to suppress the Islamic movement by ridicule, sarcasm, and by holding out promises and threats and by making false accusations, they resorted to persecution, beating and economic pressure. They would catch hold of the new Muslims of their clans and persecute them, starve them and would even inflict physical torture on them in order to coerce them to give up Islam. The most pitiful victims of their persecution were the poor people and the slaves and the proteges of the Quraish. They were beaten black and blue, were imprisoned and kept thirsty and hungry and were dragged on the burning sands of Makkah. The people would get work from the professional laborers but would not pay them their wages. As an instance we give below the story of Hadrat Khabbab bin Arat, which is given in Bukhari and Muslim: "I used to work as a blacksmith in Makkah. Once I did some work for As bin Wa'il. When I went to ask for my wages, he said, 'I will not pay your wages unless you disown Muhammad'. "

In the same connection Hadrat Khabbab says, "One day the Holy Prophet was sitting in the shadow of the Ka'abah. I went to him and said, '0 Messenger of Allah, now persecution has gone to its extreme; why do you not pray to Allah (for relief) ? ' At this the Holy Prophet was greatly moved. He said, 'The believers before you were persecuted much more than you. Their bones were scraped with combs of iron and their heads were cut with saws, but still they did not give up their Faith. I assure you that Allah will fulfill this Mission, and there will come a period of such peace that one would travel from Sanna to Hadramaut, and he will have no fear from anyone, save Allah. But you people have already become impatient'. " (Bukhari)

When the conditions became unbearable, the Holy Prophet, in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophet-hood, gave advice to his Companions to this effect: "You may well migrate to Habash, for there is a king, who does not allow any kind of injustice to anyone, and there is good in his land. You should remain there till the time that Allah provides a remedy for your affliction".

Accordingly, at first, eleven men and four women left for Habash. The Quraish pursued them up to the coast but fortunately they got a timely boat for Habash at the sea-port of Shu'aibah, and they escaped attest. Then after a few months, other people migrated to Habash and their number rose to eighty-three men and eleven women of the Quraish and seven non-Quraish. After this, only forty persons were left with the Holy Prophet at Makkah.

There was a great hue and cry in Makkah after this Migration, for every family of the Quraish was adversely affected by this. There was hardly a family of the Quraish which did not lose a son, a son-in-law, a daughter, a brother or a sister. For instance, there were among the Migrants the near relatives of Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan and other chief of the Quraish who were notorious for their persecution of the Muslims. As a result of this, some of them became even more bitter in their enmity of Islam, while there were others who were so moved by this that they embraced Islam. For instance, this Migration left a deep mark on Hadrat Umar. One of his relatives, Laila, daughter of Hathmah, says, "I was packing my luggage for Migration, while my husband, Amr bin Rabiy'ah, had gone out. In the meantime Umar came there and began to watch me, while I was engaged in preparation for the journey. Then he said, 'Are you also going to migrate? ' I answered, 'Yes by God, you people have persecuted us much. But the wide earth of Allah is open for us. Now we are going to a place where Allah will grant us peace'. At this, I noticed such signs of emotion on the face of Umar as I had never seen before. He simply said, 'May God be with you' and went away. "

After the migration, the Quraish held consultations, and decided to send Abdullah bin Abi Rabiy'ah, half brother of Abu Jahl, and Amr bin As to Habash with precious gifts so as to persuade Negus to send the migrants back to Makkah. Hadrat Umm Salmah (a wife of the Holy Prophet), who was among the migrants, has related this part of the story in detail. She says, "When these two clever statesmen of the Quraish reached Habash, they distributed the gifts among the courtiers of the King and persuaded them to recommend strongly to him to send the migrants back. Then they saw Negus himself

and, presenting rich gifts to him, said, "Some headstrong brats of our city have come to your land and our chiefs have sent us to you with the request that you may kindly send them back. These brats have forsaken our faith and have not embraced your faith either, but have invented a new faith". As soon as they had finished their speech, all the courtiers recommended their case, saying, "We should send such people back to their city for their people know them better. It is not proper for us to keep them here". At this the King was annoyed and said, "I am not going to give them back without proper enquiry. As these people have put their trust in my country rather than in any other country and have come here to take shelter, I will not betray them. At first I will send for them and investigate into the allegations these people have made against them. Then I will make my final decision". Accordingly, the King sent for the Companions of the Holy Prophet and asked them to come to his court.

When the migrants received the message of the King, they assembled and held consultations as to what they should say to the King. At last they came to this unanimous decision: "We will present before the King the teachings of the Holy Prophet without adding anything to or withholding anything from them and leave it to him whether he lets us remain here or turns us out of his country". When they came to the court, the King put this problem abruptly before them: "I understand that you have given up the faith of your own people and have neither embraced my faith nor any other existing faith. I would like to know what your new faith is. " At this, Jafar bin Abi Talib, on behalf of the migrants, made an extempore speech to this effect: "O King! We were sunk deep in ignorance and had become very corrupt; then Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) came to us as a Messenger of God, and did his best to reform us. But the Quraish began to persecute his followers, so we have come to your country in the hope that here we will be free from persecution". After his speech, the King said, "Please recite a piece of the Revelation which has been sent down by God to your Prophet". In response, Hadrat Jafar recited that portion of Surah Maryam which relates the story of Prophets John and Jesus (Allah's peace be upon them). The King listened to it and wept, so much so that his beard became wet with tears. When Hadrat Jafar finished the recital, he said: "Most surely this Revelation and the Message of Jesus have come from the same source. By God I will not give you up into the hands of these people".

Next day Amr bin As went to Negus and said, "Please send for them again and ask them concerning the creed they hold about Jesus, the son of Mary, for they say a horrible thing about him". The King again sent for the migrants, who had already learnt about the scheme of Amr. They again sat together and held consultations in regard to the answer they should give to the King, if he asked about the belief they held about Prophet Jesus. Though this was a very critical situation and all of them were uneasy about it, they decided that they would say the same thing that Allah and His Messenger had taught them. Accordingly, when they went to the court, the King put them the question that had been suggested by Amr bin As. So Jafar bin Abi Talib stood up and answered without the least hesitation: "He was a Servant of Allah and His Messenger.

He was a Spirit and a Word of Allah which had been sent to virgin Mary. " At this the King picked up a straw from the ground and said, 'Bye God, Jesus was not worth this straw more than what you have said about him. " After this the King returned the gifts sent by the Quraish, saying, "I do not take any bribe". Then he said to the migrants, "You are allowed to stay here in perfect peace. "

Theme and Subject

Keeping in view this historical background, it becomes quite obvious that this Surah was sent down to serve the migrants as a "provision" for their journey to Habash, as if to say, "Though you are leaving your country as persecuted emigrants to a Christian country, you should not in the least hide anything from the teachings you have received. Therefore you should plainly say to the Christians that Prophet Jesus was not the son of God. "

After relating the story of Prophets John and Jesus in vv. 1-40, the story of Prophet Abraham has been related (vv. 41-50) also for the benefit of the Migrants for he also had been forced like them to leave his country by the persecution of his father, his family and his country men. On the one hand, this meant to console the Emigrants that they were following the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and would attain the same good end as that Prophet did. On the other hand, it meant to warn the disbeliever, of Makkah that they should note it well that they were in the position of the cruel people who had persecuted their forefather and leader, Abraham, while the Muslim Emigrants were in the position of Prophet Abraham himself.

Then the mention of the other Prophets has been made in vv. 51-65 with a view to impress that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had brought the same way of Life that had been brought by the former Prophets but their followers had become corrupt and adopted wrong ways.

In the concluding passage (vv. 66-98), a strong criticism has been made of the evil ways of the disbelievers of Makkah, while the Believers have been given the good news that they would come out successful and become the beloved of the people, in spite of the worst efforts of the enemies of the Truth.

20. Ta-ha:

Name

This Surah takes its name from its "first word "Ta Ha". This name, like the names of many other Surahs, is merely symbolic.

Period of Revelation

The period of its revelation is the same as of Surah Maryam. It is just possible that it was sent down during the Migration to Habash or just after it. Anyhow, it is certain that this Surah was revealed before Hadrat Umar embraced Islam.

According to a well known and authentic tradition when Hadrat Umar set out to kill the Holy Prophet, he met a certain person, who said, "Before you do anything else, you should know that your own sister and brother-in-law have embraced Islam" Hearing this, he directly went to the house of his sister. There he found his sister, Fatimah, and

his brother-in-law, Said bin Zaid, learning the contents of a scroll from Khabbab bin Art. When Fatimah saw him coming she hid the scroll at once, but Hadrat Umar had heard the recital, so he began to interrogate them about it. Then he began to thrash his brother-in-law, and wounded his sister, who tried to protect him. At last both of them confessed, "We have become Muslims; you may do whatever you like. " As Hadrat Umar was moved to see blood running down from her head, he said, "Show me the thing you were reading. " The sister asked him to promise on oath that he would not tear it, and added, "You cannot touch it unless you have a bath. " Accordingly, Hadrat Umar took his bath and when he began to read the scroll, which contained this Surah, he spontaneously spoke out, "What an excellent thing! " At this Hadrat Khabbab, who had hidden himself at the sound of his footsteps, came out of his hiding and said, "By God, I have high expectations that Allah will get great service from you to propagate the Message of His Prophet, for just yesterday I heard the Holy Prophet praying to Allah, 'My Lord, make Abul Hakam bin Hisham (Abu Jahl) or Umar bin Khattab a supporter of Islam. So O Umar, turn to Allah, turn to Allah. " These words proved to be so persuasive that he at once accompanied Hadrat Khabbab and went to the Holy Prophet to embrace Islam. This happened a short time after the Migration to Habash.

Theme and Topics of Discussion

This Surah begins with the enunciation of the object of the Revelation of the Qur'an to this effect: "O Muhammad, this Qur'an has not been sent down to you to put you unnecessarily to some great affliction. It does not demand from you to perform the impossible task of imbuing the hearts of the obdurate disbelievers with Faith. It is merely an admonition meant to guide on to the Right Path those who fear God and want to save themselves from His punishment. This Qur'an is the Word of the Master of the earth and the heavens and God-head belongs to Him alone: These two facts are eternal whether one believes them or not. "

After this introduction, the Surah abruptly moves on to relate the story of Prophet Moses without any apparent relevancy and without even hinting at its applicability to the events of the period. However, if we read between the lines, we realize that the discourse is addressed very relevantly to the people of Makkah. But before we explain the hidden meaning of the discourse, we must keep in view the fact that the Arabs in general acknowledged Moses as a Prophet of God. This was so because they had "been influenced by the large number of the Jews around them and by" the neighboring Christian kingdoms. Now let us state those things which are hidden between the lines of the story:

-1. Allah does not appoint a Prophet by the beat of drums or My celebrating the occasion in a regular and formal ceremony, as if to say, "We are appointing such and such a person as Our Prophet from today. " On the contrary, He bestows Prophet-hood in a confidential manner just as He did in the case of Prophet Moses. Therefore you should not consider it strange if Hadrat Muhammad has been appointed as a Prophet all of a sudden and without any public proclamation.

-2. The fundamental principles presented by Prophet Muhammad Tauhid and the Hereafter are just the same as were taught to Prophet Moses at the time of his appointment.
-3. Prophet Muhammad has been made the standard bearer of the Message of the Truth among the people of the Quraish all by himself without material provisions, just as Prophet Moses was entrusted with the Mission to go to a tyrant king like Pharaoh and ask him to give up his attitude of rebellion. These are the mysterious ways of Allah. He catches hold of a way-farer of Midian on his way to Egypt and says, "Go and fight with the greatest tyrant of the time. " He did not provide him with armies and provisions for this Mission. The only thing He did was to appoint his brother as his assistant at his request.
-4. You, O People of Makkah, should note it well that Pharaoh employed the same devices against Prophet Moses as you are employing against Prophet Muhammad; frivolous objections, accusations, and cruel persecutions. You should know that Allah's Prophet came out victorious over Pharaoh, who possessed large armies and war equipments. Incidentally, the Muslims have been consoled and comforted, though not in so many words, that they should not be afraid of fighting with the Quraish against fearful odds, for the mission which is supported by Allah comes out victorious in the end. At the same time, the Muslims have been exhorted to follow the excellent example of the magicians of Egypt, who remained steadfast in their Faith, though Pharaoh threatened them with horrible vengeance.
-5. An incident from the story of the Israelites has been cited to show in what ridiculous manner the idolisation of false gods and goddesses starts and that the Prophets of God do not tolerate even the slightest tinge of this preposterous practice. Likewise, Prophet Muhammad is following the former Prophets in opposing shirk and idol worship today.
Thus, the story of Moses has been used to throw light on all those matters which were connected with the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. Then at the end of the story, the. Quraish have been briefly admonished, as if to say, "The Qur'an has been sent down in your tongue for your own good. If you listen to it and follow its admonition, you will be doing so for your own good but if you reject it, you will yourselves meet with an evil end. "
After this the story of Prophet Adam has been related, as if to tell the Quraish, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, whereas the right way for a man is to follow his father Adam. He was beguiled by Satan, but when he realized his error, he plainly confessed it and repented and again turned back to the service of Allah and won His favor. On the other hand, if a person follows Satan and sticks to his error obdurately in spite of admonition, he does harm to himself alone like Satan. "
In the end, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims have been advised not to be impatient in regard to the punishment to the disbelievers, as if to say, "Allah has His Own scheme concerning them. He does not seize them at once but gives them sufficient respite. Therefore you should not grow impatient but bear the persecutions with fortitude and go on conveying the Message. "

In this connection, great emphasis has been laid on salat so that it may create in the believers the virtues of patience, forbearance, contentment, resignation to the will of God and self analysis for these are greatly needed in the service of the Message of the Truth.

21. Anbiyaa:

Name

The name of this Surah has not been taken from any verse but it has been called Al-Anbiyaa because it contains a continuous account of many Anbiyaa (Prophets). Nevertheless, it is a symbolic name and not a title.

Period of Revelation

Both the subject matter and the style of the Surah indicate that it was sent down in the third stage of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah. (Sea Introduction to Chapter VI).

Subject and Topics

This Surah discusses the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the chiefs of Makkah, which was rampant at the time of its Revelation and answers those objections and doubts which were being put forward concerning his Prophet-hood and the Doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. The chiefs of Makkah have also been rebuked for their machinations against the Holy Prophet and warned of the evil consequences of their wicked activities. They have been admonished to give up their indifference and heedlessness that they were showing about the Message. At the end of the Surah, they have been told that the person whom they considered to be a "distress and affliction" had in reality come to them as a blessing.

Main Themes

In vv. 1-47, the following themes have been discussed in particular :

(1) The objection of the disbelievers that a human being could not be a Messenger and therefore they could not accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet, has been refuted.

(2) They have been taken to task for raising multifarious and contradictory objections against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'an.

(3) Their wrong conception of life has been proved to be false because it was responsible for their indifferent and heedless attitude towards the Message of the Holy Prophet. They believed that life was merely a sport and pastime and had no purpose behind or before it and there was no accountability or reward or punishment.

(4) The main cause of the conflict between the disbelievers and the Holy Prophet was their insistence on the doctrine of shirk and antagonism to the Doctrine of Tauhid So the doctrine of skirk has been refuted and the Doctrine of Tauhid reinforced by weighty and impressive though brief arguments.

(5) Arguments and admonitions have been used to remove another misunderstanding of theirs. They presumed that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a false prophet and his warnings of a scourge from God were empty threats, just because no scourge was visiting them in spite of their persistent rejection of the Prophet. In vv. 48-91, instances

have been cited from the important events of the life stories of the Prophets to show that all the Prophets, who were sent by God, were human beings and had all the characteristics of a man except those which were exclusive to Prophet-hood. They had no share in Godhead and they had to implore Allah to fulfill each and every necessity of theirs.
Along with these two other things have also been mentioned:
(1) All the Prophets had to pass through distress and affliction; their opponents did their worst to thwart their mission, but in spite of it they came out successful by the extraordinary succor from Allah.
(2) All the Prophets had one and the same "way of life', the same as was being presented by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that was the only Right Way of Life and all other ways invented and introduced by mischievous people were utterly wrong.
In vv. 92-106, it has been declared that only those who follow the Right Way, will come out successful in the final judgment of God and those who discard it shall meet with the worst consequences. In vv. 107-112, the people have been told that it is a great favor of Allah that He has sent His Messenger to inform them beforehand of this Reality and that those, who consider his coming to be an affliction instead of a blessing, are foolish people.

22. Hajj:

Name
This Surah takes its name from v. 27.
Period of Revelation
As this Surah contains the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Surahs, the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation, but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (vv. 1-24) was sent down in the last stage of the Makki life of the Holy Prophet a little before migration and the rest (vv. 25-78) during the first stage of his Madani life. That is why this Surah combines the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Surahs.
The sudden change of the style from v. 25 shows that probably vv. 25-78 were sent down in the month of Zul-Hijjah in the very first year after Hijrah This is indicated by vv. 25-41 and confirmed by the occasion of the revelation of vv. 39-40. It appears that the month of Zul-Hijjah must have brought to the immigrants nostalgic memories of their homes in Makkah and naturally they must have thought of their Sacred City and of their Hajj congregation there, and grieved to think that the mushrik Quraish had debarred them from visiting the Sacred Mosque. Therefore, they might even have been praying for and expecting Divine permission to wage war against those tyrants who had expelled them from their homes and deprived them of visiting the House of Allah and made it difficult for them to follow the way of Islam. It was at this psychological occasion that these verses were sent down. That is why the purpose for which Masjid al Haram was built has been specifically mentioned. It has been made plain that Hajj (pilgrimage) had been enjoined for the worship of One Allah. But it is an irony that

afterwards it had been dedicated to the rituals of shirk and the worshippers of One Allah had been debarred from visiting it. Therefore, permission for waging war against those tyrants has been given to oust them from there and to establish the righteous way of life for establishing virtue and eradicating evil. According to Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Urwah bin Zubair, Zaid bin Aslam, Muqatil bin Hayyan, Qatadah and other great commentators, v. 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of Hadith and books on the life of the Holy Prophet confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Safar AH 2, which is known as the Expedition of Waddan or Al-Abwa.

Subject Matter and Theme This Surah is addressed to: (1) The mushriks of Makkah, (2) the wavering Muslims, and (3) the True Believers. The mushriks have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: "You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of Allah, though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the Divine Messenger. Now you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community; now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God". At the same time, they have been admonished time and again for their creed of shirk and sound arguments have been given in favor of Tauhid and the Hereafter.

The wavering Muslims, who had embraced Islam but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way, have been admonished to this effect: "What is this faith of yours? On the one hand, you are ready to believe in Allah and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but, on the other, if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way, you discard your Allah and cease to remain His servant. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which Allah has ordained for you. "

As regards the true Believers, they have been addressed in two ways: (1) in a general way so as to include the common people of Arabia also, and (2) in an exclusive way:

(1) The Believers have been told that the mushriks of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Hajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraish. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraish mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Hajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Hajj and Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraish. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham by the Command of Allah and he had invited all the peoples to perform Hajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights by the local people from the very beginning. It has also been made clear that that House

had not been built for the rituals of shirk but for the worship of One Allah. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of Allah was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full license.
(2) In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraish, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the Believers have been officially given the name of "Muslims", saying, "You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the Truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish salat and pay the zakat dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihad for propagating the Word of Allah. " (vv. 41, 77, 78.)
It will be worth while to keep in view the introductions to Chapters II (Al-Baqarah) and VIII (Al Anfal).

23. Mumineen:

Name
The surah takes its name, Al-Muminun, from the first verse.
Period of Revelation. Both its style and theme
indicate that it was revealed during the middle stage of Prophet-hood at Makkah. Reading between the lines, one feels that a bitter conflict had begun between the, Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah, though the persecution by them had not yet become tyrannical. It appears that the surah was sent down during the climax of the "Famine" in Makkah (vv. 75-76), which according to authentic traditions occurred during the middle stage of Prophet-hood. Moreover, according to a tradition related by 'Urwah bin Zubair, Hadrat Umar who had embraced Islam by that time, said, "This Surah was revealed in my presence and I myself observed the state of the Holy Prophet during its revelation. When the revelation ended, the Holy Prophet remarked, 'On this occasion ten such verses have been sent down to me that the one who measures up to them, will most surely go to Paradise'. Then he recited the initial verses of the surah. " (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Nasai, Haakim).
Theme Topics
The central theme of the surah is to invite the people to accept and follow the Message of the Holy Prophet and the whole Surah revolves round this theme.

24. Noor:

Name
This Surah takes its name, An Noor, from verse 35.
Period of Revelation
The consensus of opinion is that it was sent down after the Campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq and this is confirmed by vv. 11-20 that deal with the incident of the "Slander", which occurred during that Campaign. But there is a difference of opinion as to whether this Campaign took place in 5 A. H. before the Battle of the Trench or in 6 A. H. after it. It is important to decide this issue in order to determine whether this Surah was sent

down earlier or Surah Al-Ahzab (XXXIII), which is the only other Surah containing the Commandments about the observance of purdah by women. Surah Al-Ahzab was admittedly sent down on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. Now if this Battle occurred earlier, it would mean that the initial instructions in connection with the Commandments of purdah were sent down in Surah Al-Ahzab, and they were complemented later by the Commandments revealed in this Surah. On the other hand, if the Campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq occurred earlier, the chronological order of the Commandments would be reversed, and it would become difficult to understand the legal wisdom and implications of the Commandments of purdah.

According to Ibn Sa'd, the Campaign against Bani al Mustaliq took place in Shaban 5 A. H. and the Battle of the Trench in Zil-Qa'dah the same year. This opinion is based on some traditions from Hadarat Ayesha about the events connected with the "Slander" in which she refers to a dispute between Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubadah and Sa'd bin Mu'az. Hadrat Sa'd bin Mu'az, according to authentic traditions, died during the Campaign against Bani Quraizah, which took place immediately after the Battle of the Trench. It is, therefore, evident that he could not be present in 6 A. H. to take part in a dispute about the "Slander".

On the other hand, Muhammad bin Ishaq says that the Battle of the Trench took place in Shawwal 5 A. H. and the Campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq in Sha'ban 6 A. H. This opinion is supported by many authentic traditions from Hadrat Ayesha and others. According to these traditions, (1) the Commandments about purdah had been sent down in Surah Al-Ahzab before the incident of the "Slander", (2) the Holy Prophet had married Hadrat Zainab in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A. H. after the Battle of the Trench, (3) Hamnah, sister of Hadrat Zainab, had taken a leading part in spreading the "Slander", just because Hadrat Ayesha was a rival of her sister. All this evidence supports the view of Muhammad bin Ishaq.

Now let us consider the two opinions a little more closely. The only argument in favor of the first opinion is the mention of the presence of Hadrat Sa'd bin Mu'az in a dispute connected with the incident of the "Slander". But this argument is weakened by some other traditions from Hadrat Ayesha, in which she mentions Hadara Usaid bin Hudair instead of Hadrat Sa'd bin Mu'az in this dispute. It may, therefore, be assumed that there has been some confusion regarding the two names in reporting the traditions. Moreover, if we accept the first opinion, just because of the mention of the name of Hadrat Sa'd bin Mu'az in some traditions, we encounter other difficulties that cannot be resolved in any way. For, in that case, we shall have to admit that the revelation of the Commandments of purdah and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab had taken place even earlier than the Battle of the Trench. But we learn from the Qur'an and many authentic traditions that both these events happened after that Battle and the Campaign against Bani Quraizah. That is why Ibn Hazm, Ibn Qayyim and some other eminent scholars have held the opinion of Muhammad bin Ishaq as correct, and we also hold it to be so. Thus, we conclude that Surah Al Ahzab was sent down earlier than Surah An-Noor, which was revealed in the latter half of 6 A. H. several months after Surah Al Ahzab.

Historical Background

Now let us review the circumstances existing at the time of the revelation of this surah. It should be kept in mind that the incident of the "Slander", which was the occasion of its revelation, was closely connected with the conflict between Islam and the disbelievers.

After the victory at Badr, the Islamic movement began to gain strength day by day; so much so that by the time of the Battle of the Trench, it had become so strong that the united forces of the enemy numbering about ten thousand failed to crush it and had to raise the siege of Al Madinah after one month. It meant this, and both the parties understood it well, that the war of aggression which the Disbelievers had been waging for several years, had come to an end. The Holy Prophet himself declared: "After this year, the Quraish will not be able to attack you; now you will take the offensive. "

When the disbelievers realized that they could not defeat Islam on the battlefield, they chose the moral front to carry on the conflict. It cannot be said with certainty whether this Change of tactics was the outcome of deliberate consultations, or it was the inevitable result of the humiliating retreat in the Battle of the Trench, for which all the available forces of the enemy had been concentrated: They knew it well that the rise of Islam was nor due to the numerical strength of the Muslims nor to their superior arms and ammunition nor to their greater material resources; nay, the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds on all these fronts. They owed their success to their moral superiority. Their enemies realized that the pure and noble qualities of the Holy Prophet and his followers were capturing the hearts of the people, and were also binding them together into a highly disciplined community. As a result of this, they were defeating the mushriks and the Jews both on the peace and on the war front, because the latter lacked discipline and character.

Under the above mentioned circumstances, the wicked designs of the disbelievers led them to start a campaign of vilification against the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in order to destroy the bulwark of morale that was helping them to defeat their enemies. Therefore the strategy was to attain the assistance of the hypocrites to spread slanders against the Holy Prophet and his followers so that the mushriks and the Jews could exploit these to sow the seeds of discord among the Muslims and undermine their discipline.

The first opportunity for the use of the new strategy was afforded in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A. H. when the Holy Prophet married Hadrat Zainab (daughter of Jahsh), who was the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Harithah. The Holy Prophet had arranged this marriage in order to put an end to the custom of ignorance, which gave the same status to the adopted son that was the right only of the son from one's own loins. The hypocrites, however, considered it a golden opportunity to vilify the Holy Prophet from inside the community, and the Jews and the mushriks exploited it from outside to ruin his high reputation by this malicious slander. For this purpose fantastic stories were concocted and spread to this effect: "One day Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him)

happened to see the wife of his adopted son and fell in love with her; he maneuvered her divorce and married her.
Though this was an absurd fiction it was spread with such skill, cunning and artfulness that it succeeded in its purpose; so much so that some Muslim traditionalist and commentators also have cited some parts of it in their writings, and the orientalists have exploited these fully to vilify the Holy Prophet.
As a matter of fact, Hadrat Zainab was never a stranger to the Holy Prophet that he should see her by chance and fall in love with her at first sight. For she was his first cousin, being the daughter of his real paternal aunt, Umaimah, daughter of Abdul Muttalib. He had known her from her childhood to her youth. A year before this incident, he himself had persuaded her against her will to marry Hadarat Zaid in order to demonstrate practically that the Quraish and the liberated slaves were equal as human being. As she never reconciled herself to her marriage with a liberated slave, they could not pull on together for long, which inevitably led to her divorce.
The above mentioned facts were well known to all, yet the slanderers succeeded in their false propaganda with the result that even today there are people who exploit these things to defame Islam.
The second slander was made on the honor of Hadrat Ayesha, a wife of the Holy Prophet, in connection with an incident which occurred while he was returning from the Campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq. As this attack was even severer than the first one and was the main background of this Surah, we shall deal with it in greater detail.
Let us say a few words about Abdullah bin Ubayy, who played the part of a villain in this attack. He belonged to the clan of Khazraj and was one of the most important chiefs of Al-Madinah. The people had even intended to make him their king a little before the Holy Prophet's migration there, but the scheme had to be dropped because of the changed circumstances. Though he had embraced Islam, he remained at heart a hypocrite and his hypocrisy was so manifest that he was called the "Chief of the Hypocrites". He never lost any opportunity to slander Islam in order to take his revenge.
Now the main theme. When in Sha'ban 6 A. H. the Holy Prophet learned that the people of Bani al-Mustaliq were making preparations for a war against the Muslims and were trying to muster other clans also for this purpose, he forestalled and took the enemy by surprise. After capturing the people of the clan and their belongings, the Holy Prophet made a halt near Muraisi, a spring in their territory. One day a dispute concerning taking water from the spring started between a servant of Hadrat Umar and an ally of the clan of Khazraj, and developed into a quarrel between the Muhajirs (immigrants) and the Ansaar (Muslims of Mad! nah), but was soon settled. This, however, did not suit the strategy of Abdullah bin Ubayy, who also had joined the expedition with a large number of hypocrites. So he began to incite the Ansaar, saying, "You yourselves brought these people of the Quraish from Makkah and made them partners in your wealth and property. And now they have become your rivals and want domination over you. If even now you withdraw your support from them, they shall be forced to leave your city. "

Then he swore and declared, "As soon as we reach back Al-Madinah, the respectable people will turn out the degraded people from the city. '

When the Holy Prophet came to know of this, he ordered the people to set off immediately and march back to Al-Madinah. The forced march continued up to noon the next day without a halt on the way so that the people became exhausted and had no time for idle talk.

Though this wise judgment and quick action by the Holy Prophet averted the undesirable consequences of the mischief, Abdullah bin Ubayy got another opportunity for doing a far more serious and greater mischief, i. e. by engineering a "Slander" against Hadrat Ayesha, for that was a mischief which might well have involved the young Muslim Community in a civil war, if the Holy Prophet and his sincere and devoted followers had not shown wisdom, forbearance and marvelous discipline in dealing with it. In order to understand the events that led to the incident of the "Slander", we cite the story in Hadrat 'Ayesha's own words.

She says:

"Whenever the Holy Prophet went out on a journey, he decided by lots as to which of his wives should accompany him. Accordingly, it was decided that I should accompany him during the expedition to Bani al Mustaliq.

On the return journey, the Holy Prophet halted for the night at a place which was the last stage on the way back to Al-Madinah. It was still night, when they began to make preparations for the march. So I went outside the camp to ease myself. When I returned and came near my halting place, I noticed that my necklace had fallen down somewhere. I went back in search for it but in the meantime the caravan moved off and I was left behind all alone. The four carriers of the litter had placed it on my camel without noticing that it was empty. This happened because of my light weight due to lack of food in those days.

I wrapped myself in my sheet and lay down in the hope that when it would be found that I had been left behind, a search party would come back to pick me up. In the meantime I fell asleep.

In the morning, when Safwan bin Mu'attal Sulami passed that way, he saw me and recognized me for he had seen me several times before the Commandment about purdah had been sent down. No sooner did he see me than he stopped his camel and cried out spontaneously : "How sad! The wife of the Holy Prophet has been left here! "

At this I woke up all of a sudden and covered my face with my sheet. Without uttering another word, he made his camel kneel by me and stood aside, while I climbed on to the camel back. He led the camel by the nose-string and we overtook the caravan at about noon, when it had just halted and nobody had yet noticed that I had been left behind.

I learnt afterwards that this incident had been used to slander me, and Abdullah bin Ubayy was foremost among the slanderers. (According to other traditions, when Hadrat Ayesha reached the camp on the camel, led by Safwan, and it was known that she had been left behind, Abdullah bin Ubayy cried out, 'By God, she could not have remained

chaste. Look, there comes the wife of your Prophet openly on the camel led by the person with whom she passed the night. ')

"When I reached Al-Madinah, I fell ill and stayed in bed for more than a month. Though I was quite unaware of it, the news of the "Slander" was spreading like a scandal in the city, and had also reached the Holy Prophet. Anyhow, I noticed that he did not seem as concerned about my illness he used to be. He would come but without addressing me directly, would inquire from others how I was and leave the house. Therefore it troubled my mind that something had gone wrong somewhere. So I took leave of him and went to my mother's house for better nursing.

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Historical Background. . . . . .

"While I was there, one night I went out of the city to ease myself in the company of Mistah's mother, who was a first cousin of my mother. As she was walking along she stumbled over something and cried out spontaneously, 'May Mistah perish! ' To this I retorted, 'What a good mother you are that you curse your own son, the son who took part in the Battle of Badr. ' She replied, 'My dear daughter, are you not aware of his scandal mongering? ' Then she told me everything about the campaign of the "Slander". (Besides the hypocrites, some true Muslims also had been involved in this campaign, and among them who took leading part in it, were Mistah, Hassan bin Thabit, the famous poet of Islam, and Hamnah, daughter of Jahsh and sister of Hadrat Zainab). Hearing this horrible story, my blood curdled, and I immediately returned home, and passed the rest of the night in crying over it.

"During my absence the Holy Prophet took counsel with Ali and Usamah bin Zaid about this matter. Usamah said good words about me to this effect: 'O Messenger of Allah, we have found nothing but good in your wife. All that is being spread about her is a lie and calumny. ' As regards Ali, he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, there is no dearth of women; you may, if you like, marry an other wife. If, however, you would like to investigate into the matter, you may send for her maid servant and inquire into it through her. ' Accordingly, the maid servant was sent for and questioned. She replied, 'I declare on an oath by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, that I have never seen any evil thing in her, except that she falls asleep when I tell her to look after the kneaded dough in my absence and a goat comes and eats it. '

"On that same day the Holy Prophet addressed the people from the pulpit, saying: 'O Muslims, who from among you will defend my honor against the attacker of the person who has transgressed all bounds in doing harm to me by slandering my wife. By God, I have made a thorough enquiry and found nothing wrong with her nor with the man, whose name has been linked with the "Slander". At this Usaid bin Hudair (or Sa'd bin Mu`aaz) according to other traditions) stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if that person belongs to our clan, we will kill him by ourselves, but if he belongs to the Khazraj clan, we will kill him if you order us to do so. ' Hearing this Sa'd bin 'Ubadah, 2 chief of the Khazraj clan, stood up and said, 'You lie you can never kill him. You are saying this just because the person belongs to our clan of Khazraj. Had he belonged to

your clan, you would never have said so. ' Hadrat Usaid retorted, 'You are a hypocrite: that is why you are defending a hypocrite. ' At this, there was a general turmoil in the mosque, which would have developed into a riot, even though the Holy Prophet was present there the whole time. But he cooled down their anger and came down from the pulpit. "

The remaining details of the incident will be cited along with our commentary on the Text, which honorably absolved Hadrat Aishah from the blame. But here we would only want to point out the enormity of the mischief that was engineered by Abdullah bin Ubayy: (1) It implied an attack on the honor of the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Abu Bakr Siddiq. (2) He meant to undermine the high moral superiority which was the greatest asset of the Islamic Movement (3) He intended to ignite civil war between the Muhajirs and the Ansaar, and between Aus and Khazraj, the two clans of the Ansaar.

Theme and Topics This Surah and vv. 28-73 of Surah Al-Ahzab (of which this is the sequel) were sent down to strengthen the moral front, which at that time was the main target of the attack, vv. 28-73 of Al-Ahzab were sent down concerning the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab, and on the occasion of the second attack (the "Slander" about Hadrat Aishah), Surah An-Noor was sent down to repair the cracks that had appeared in the unity of the Muslim Community. If we keep this in view during the study of the two Surahs, we shall understand the wisdom that underlies the Commandments about purdah. Allah sent the following instructions to strengthen and safeguard the moral front, and to counteract the storm of propaganda that was raised on the occasion of the marriage of Hazrat Zainab:

(1) The wives of the Holy Prophet were enjoined to remain within their private quarters, to avoid display of adornments and to be cautious in their talk with other persons (vv. 32, 33).

(2) The other Muslims were forbidden to enter the private rooms of the Holy Prophet and instructed to ask whatever they wanted from behind the curtain. (v. 53).

(3) A line of demarcation was drawn between the mahram and the non-mahram relatives. Only the former were allowed to enter the private rooms of those wives of the Holy Prophet with whom they were so closely related as to prohibit marriage with them. (v. 55).

(4) The Muslims were told that the wives of the Prophet were prohibited for them just like their own real mothers; therefore every Muslim should regard them with the purest of intentions. (vv. 53, 54).

(5) The Muslims were warned that they would invite the curse and scourge of Allah if they offended the Holy Prophet. Likewise it was a heinous sin to attack the honor of or slander any Muslim man or woman. (vv. 57, -8).

(6) All the Muslim women were enjoined to cover their faces with their sheets if and when they had to go out of their houses. (v. 59).

On the occasion of the second attack, this Surah was sent down to keep pure and strengthen the moral fibre of the Muslim society, which had been shaken by the enormity of the slander. We give below a summary of the Commandments and

instructions in their chronological order so that one may understand how the Qur'an makes use of the psychological occasion to reform the Community by the adoption of legal, moral and social measures.

(1) Fornication which had already been declared to be a social crime (IV: 15, 16) was now made a criminal offense and was to be punished with a hundred lashes.

(2) It was enjoined to boycott the adulterous men and women and the Muslims were forbidden to have any marriage relations with them.

(3) The one, who accused the other of adultery but failed to produce four witnesses, was to be punished with eighty lashes.

(4) The Law of Li`aan was prescribed to decide the charge of adultery against his own wife by a husband.

(5) The Muslims were enjoined to learn a lesson from the incident of the "Slander" about Hadrat Aishah, as if to say, "You should be very cautious in regard to charges of adultery against the people of good reputation, and should not spread these; nay, you should refute and suppress them immediately. " In this connection, a general principle was enunciated that the proper spouse for a pure man is a pure woman, for he cannot pull on with a wicked woman for long, and the same is the case with a pure woman, as if to say, "When you knew that the Holy Prophet was a pure man, nay, the purest of all human beings, how could you believe that he had experienced happiness with a wicked woman and exalted her as the most beloved of his wives? For it was obvious that an adulterous woman could not have been able to deceive, with her affected behavior, a pure man like the Holy Prophet. You ought also to have considered the fact that the accuser was a mean person while the accused was a pure woman. This should have been enough to convince you that the accusation was not worth your consideration; nay, it was not even conceivable.

(6) Those who spread news and evil rumors and propagate wickedness in the Muslim Community, deserve punishment and not encouragement.

(7) A general principle was laid down that relations in the Muslim Community should be based on good faith and not on suspicion: everyone should be treated as innocent unless he is proved to be guilty and vice versa.

(8) The people were forbidden to enter the houses of others unceremoniously and were instructed to take permission for this.

(9) Both men and women were instructed to lower their gaze and forbidden to cast glances or make eyes at each other.

(10) Women were enjoined to cover their heads and breasts even inside their houses.

(11) Women were forbidden to appear with make-up before other men except their servants or such relatives with whom their marriage is prohibited.

(12) They were enjoined to hide their make-ups when they went out of their houses, and even forbidden to put on jingling ornaments, while they moved out of their houses.

(13) Marriage was encouraged and enjoined even for slaves and slave girls, for unmarried people help spread indecency.

(14) The institution of slavery was discouraged and the owners and other people were enjoined to give financial help to the slaves to earn their freedom under the law of Mukatabat.
(15) Prostitution by slave girls was forbidden in the first instance, for prostitution in Arabia was confined to this class alone. This in fact implied the legal prohibition of prostitution.
(16) Sanctity of privacy in home life was enjoined even for servants and under age children including one's own. They were enjoined not to enter the private rooms of any man or woman without permission; especially in the morning, at noon and at night.
(17) Old women were given the concession that they could set aside their head covers within their houses but should refrain from display of adornments. Even they were told that it was better for them to keep themselves covered with head wrappers.
(18) The blind, lame, crippled and sick persons were allowed to take any article of food from the houses of other people without permission, for it was not to be treated like theft and cheating, which are cognizable offenses.
(19) On the other hand, the Muslims were encouraged to develop mutual relationships by taking their meals together, and the nearest relatives and intimate friends were allowed to take their meals in each other's house without any formal invitation. This was to produce mutual affection and sincere relationships between them to counteract any future mischief. Side by side with these instructions, clear signs of the Believers and the hypocrites were stated to enable every Muslim to discriminate between the two. At the same time the Community was bound together by adopting disciplinary measures in order to make it stronger and firmer than it was at the time so as to discourage the enemies from creating mischief in it.
Above all, the most conspicuous thing about this discourse is that it is free from the bitterness which inevitably follows such shameful and absurd attacks. Instead of showing any wrath at this provocation, the discourse prescribes some laws and regulations and enjoins reformative commandments and issues wise instructions that were required at the time for the education and training of the Community. Incidentally, this teaches us how to deal with such provocative mischiefs coolly, wisely and generously. At the same time, it is a clear proof that this is not the word of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but of a Being Who is observing all human conditions and affairs from the highest level, and guiding mankind without any personal prejudices, feelings and leanings. Had this been the word of the Holy Prophet; there would have been at least some tinge of natural bitterness in spite of his great generosity and forbearance, for it is but human that a noble man naturally become enraged when his own honor is attacked in this mean manner.

25. Furqaan:

Name

The Surah takes its name "Al-Furqaan" from the first verse. Though it is symbolic like the names of many other Surahs, it has a close relation to its subject matter.

Period of Revelation
It appears from its style and subject matter that, like Surah Al-Mu'minun, it was also revealed during the third stage of Prophet-hood at Makkah. Ibn Jarir and Imam Razi have cited a tradition of Dahhak bin Muzahim that this Surah was revealed eight years before Surah An Nisa. This also confirms our opinion as to its period of revelation. (Ibn Jarir, Vol. XIX, pp. 28-30, and Tafsir Kabir, Vol. VI, p. 358).
Subject Matter and Topics The Surah deals with the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Qur'an, the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and his teachings by the disbelievers of Makkah. Appropriate answers to each and every objection have been given and the people have been warned of the consequences of rejecting the Truth. At the end of the Surah, a clear picture of the moral superiority of the Believers has been depicted as in the beginning of Surah Al-Mu'minun, as if to say, 'Here is the criterion for distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit. This is the noble character of those people who have believed in and followed the teachings of the Holy Prophet and this is the kind of people that he is trying to train. You may yourselves compare and contrast this type of people with those Arabs, who have not as yet accepted the Message, and who are upholding "ignorance" and exerting their utmost to defeat the Truth. Now you may judge for yourselves as to which you would like to choose. " Though this question was not posed in so many words, it was placed before every one in Arabia in a tangible shape. It may be noted that during the next few years, the practical answer given to this question by the whole nation, with the exception of a small minority, was that they chose Islam.

26. Shu`araa:

Name
The Surah takes its name from verse 224 in which the word Ash-Shu`araa' occurs.
Period of Revelation
The subject matter and the style show, and the traditions confirm, that it was revealed during the middle Makkan period. According to Ibn Abbas, Surah Ta Ha was revealed first, then Surah Al Waqiah, and then Surah Ash-Shu'araa. (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, Vol. xIx, p. 64). About Surah Ta Ha it is well known that it had been revealed before Hadrat Umar embraced Islam.
Subject Matter and Topics
The background of the Surah is that the disbelievers of Makkah were persistently refusing, on one pretext or the other, to accept the message of Islam given by the Holy Prophet. Sometimes they would say that he did not show them any sign to convince them of his Prophet-hood; sometimes they would brand him as a poet or a sorcerer and mock his message; and sometimes they would ridicule his Mission, saying that his followers were either a few foolish youth, or the poor people and slaves whereas, they argued, if his Mission had really some value for the people, the nobles and the elders would have accepted it first. Thus, while on the one hand, the Holy Prophet was becoming wearied by his efforts to show them rationally the errors of their creeds and

prove the truth of the Doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter, the disbelievers, on the other, were never tired of adopting one kind of obduracy after the other. This state of affairs was causing great anguish and grief to the Holy Prophet.
Such were the conditions when this Surah was revealed. It begins with words of consolation to the Holy Prophet, implying, "Why do you fret for their sake? If these people have not believed in you, it is not because they have not seen any Sign, but because they are obdurate. They will not listen to reason they want to see a Sign which makes them bow their heads in humility. When this Sign is shown in due course of time, they will themselves realize that what was being presented to them was the Truth. "
After this introduction, till verse 191, one and the same theme has been presented continuously, and it is said: "The whole earth abounds in such Signs as can guide a seeker after truth to Reality, but the stubborn and misguided people have never believed even after seeing the Signs, whether these were the Signs of the natural phenomena or the miracles of the Prophets. These wretched people have stubbornly adhered to their erroneous creeds till the Divine scourge actually overtook them. " It is to illustrate this that the history of seven of the ancient tribes has been told, who persisted in disbelief just like the disbelievers of Makkah. In this connection, the following points have been stressed:
(1) The Signs are of two kinds: (a) Those which are scattered all over the earth, and by seeing which an intelligent person can judge for himself whether what the Prophet is presenting is the Truth or not and (b) those which were seen by Pharaoh and his people, Noah's people, the Ad and the Thamud, Lot's people and the people of Aiykah. Now it is for the disbelievers to decide which kind of the Signs they are eager to see.
(2) The mentality of the disbeliever has been the same throughout the ages; their arguments and their objections, and their excuses and subterfuges for not believing have been similar and ultimately the fates that they met have also been the same. Likewise, the Prophets in every age presented the same teachings, their personal character and their reasoning and arguments against their opponents were the same, and they were all similarly blessed with mercy by Allah Almighty. Both these patterns of behavior and conduct are found in history, and the disbelievers could themselves see as to which respective patterns they and the Holy Prophet belonged.
(3) Allah is All Mighty, All Powerful and All Merciful at the same time. History contains instances of His Wrath as well as of His Mercy. Now, therefore, it is for the people to decide whether they would like to deserve Allah's Mercy or His Wrath.
(4) Lastly, the discussion has been summed up, saying "O disbelievers, if at all you want to see the Signs, why should you insist on seeing those horrible Signs that visited the doomed communities of the past? Why don't you see the Qur'an which is being presented in your own language? Why don't you see Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and mercy) and his Companions? Can the revelations of the Qur'an be the work of a satan or a jinn? Does the recipient of the Qur'an appear to be a sorcerer? Are Muhammad and his Companions no different from a poet and his admirers? Why don't you give up disbelief and search your hearts for their judgment? When in the heart of

your hearts you yourselves believe that the Revelations of the Qur'an have nothing in common with sorcery and poetry, then you should know that you are being cruel and unjust, and will certainly meet the doom meant for the cruel and unjust. "

27. Naml:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the phrase wadin-naml which occurs in verse 18, implying that it is a Surah in which the story of An-Naml (the Ant) has been related.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style bear full resemblance with the Surahs of the middle Makkan period and this is supported by traditions as well. According to Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, "First the Surah Ash Shu`araa was sent down, then the Surah An Naml and then Al-Qasas. "

Theme and Topics

The Surah consists of two discourses, the first from the beginning of the Surah to the end of verse 58, and the second from verse 59 to the end of the Surah. The theme of the first discourse is that only those people can benefit from the guidance of the Quran and become worthy of the good promises made in it, who accept the realities which this Book presents as the basic realities of the universe, and then follow up their belief with obedience and submission in their practical lives as well. But the greatest hindrance for man to follow this way is the denial of the Hereafter. For it makes him irresponsible, selfish and given to worldly life, which in turn makes it impossible for him to submit himself before God and to accept the moral restrictions on his lusts and desires. After this introduction three types of character have been presented.

The first type Is characterized by Pharaoh and the chiefs of Thamud and the rebels of the people of Lot, who were all heedless of the accountability of the Hereafter and had consequently become the slaves of the world. These people did not believe even after seeing the miracles. Rather they turned against those who invited them to goodness and piety. They persisted in their evil ways which are held in abhorrence by every sensible person. They did not heed the admonition even until a moment before they were overtaken by the scourge of Allah.

The second type of character is of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), who had been blessed by God with wealth and kingdom and grandeur to an extent undreamt of by the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah. But, since he regarded himself as answerable before God and had the feeling that whatever he had was only due to Allah's bounty, he had adopted the attitude of obedience before Him and there was no tinge of vanity in his character.

The third type is of the queen of Sheba, who ruled over a most wealthy and well known people in the history of Arabia. She possessed all those means of life, which could cause a person to become vain and conceited. Her wealth and possessions far exceeded the wealth and possessions of the Quraish. Then she professed shirk, which was not only an ancestral way of life with her, but she had to follow it in order to maintain her

position as a ruler. Therefore, it was much more difficult for her to give up shirk and adopt the way of tauhid than it could be for a common mushrik. But when the Truth became evident to her, nothing could stop her from accepting it. Her deviation was, in fact, due to her being born and brought up in a polytheistic environment and not because of her being a slave to her lusts and desires. Her conscience was not devoid of the sense of accountability before God.

In the second discourse, at the outset, attention has been drawn to some of the most glaring and visible realities of the universe, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been asked one question after the other to the effect : "Do these realities testify to the creed of shirk which you are following, or to the truth of tauhid to which the Qur'an invites you? " After this the real malady of the disbelievers has been pointed out, saying, "The thing which has blinded them and made them insensitive to every glaring reality is their denial of the Hereafter. This same thing has rendered every matter and affair of life non-serious for them. For, when according to them, everything has to become dust ultimately, and the whole struggle of life is purposeless and without an object before it, the truth and falsehood are equal and alike. Therefore, the question whether one's system of life is based on the right or wrong foundations, becomes meaningless for him. "

But the discourse, as outlined above, is not meant to dissuade the Prophet and the Muslims from calling the obdurate and heedless people to the way of tauhid; it is, in fact, intended to arouse them from their slumber. That is why in vv. 67-93 certain things have been said repeatedly in order to produce in the people a sense of the Hereafter, to warn them of the consequences of being heedless of it, and to convince them of its coining, like an eye witness of something, who convinces the other person of it, who has not seen it.

In conclusion, the real invitation of the Quran that is, the invitation to serve One Allah alone, has been presented in a concise but forceful manner, and the people warned that accepting it would be to their own advantage and rejecting it to their own disadvantage. For if they deferred their faith until they saw those Signs of God after the appearance of which they would be left with no choice but to believe and submit, they should bear in mind the fact that that would be the time of judgment and believing then would be of no avail.

28. Qasas:

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 25 in which the word Al-Qasas occurs. Lexically, qasas means to relate events in their proper sequence. Thus, from the viewpoint of the meaning too, this word can be a suitable title for this Surah, for in it the detailed story of the Prophet Moses has been related.

Period of Revelation

As already mentioned in the introduction to Surah An Naml, according to Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, Surahs Ash-Shu`araa, An-Naml and Al-Qasas were sent down one

after the other. The language, the style and the theme also show that the period of the revelation of these three Surahs is nearly the same. Another reason for their lose resemblance is that the different parts of the Prophet Moses story as mentioned in these surahs together make up a complete story. In Surah Ash-Shu`araa, excusing himself for not accepting the office of Prophet-hood the Prophet Moses submits, "The people of Pharaoh have the charge of a crime against me; therefore, I fear that they will put me to death. " Then, when lie goes before Pharaoh, the latter says, "Did we not bring you up as a child in our house? You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did. " Nothing more of this has been mentioned there, but in this Surah the other details have been supplied. Similarly, in Surah An-Naml the story starts abruptly from the time when the Prophet Moses was journeying with his family and suddenly saw a fire at a distance. In that Surah nothing has been said about the nature of his journey, or the place he was coming from, or his destination, but this Surah supplies all the necessary details. Thus, the three Surahs read together complete the story of the Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

Theme and Topics

The main theme is to remove the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and to invalidate the excuses which were being offered for not believing in him.

For this purpose, first the story of the Prophet Moses has been related, which, by analogy with the period of revelation, impresses the following points in the listener's mind automatically:

First, Allah provides the means and motives of whatever He wills to do, in imperceptible ways. Thus, Allah so arranged things that the child through whom Pharaoh had to be removed from power, was bred and brought up in his own house, and he could not know whom he was fostering. Who can then fight God and frustrate Him by his machinations.

Secondly, Prophet-hood is not granted to a person amid festivities by issuing a proclamation from the earth and heavens. You wonder how Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been blessed with Prophet-hood unexpectedly, all of a sudden, but Moses whom you yourselves acknowledge as a Prophet (v. 48) had also become a Prophet unexpectedly, while on a journey, and nobody had known what event had occurred in the desolation at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Even Moses himself did not know a moment before what he was going to be blessed with. He, in fact, had gone to bring a piece of the fire but had returned with the gift of Prophet-hood

Thirdly, the person from whom Allah wants to take some service comes out without any army and armor and without an apparent helper or force at his back, yet he puts to rout much stronger and better equipped opponents. The contrast that existed between the strengths of Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh was much more prominent and glaring than that which existed between Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the

Quraish; yet the world knows who had come out victorious in the end and who had been routed.
Fourthly, you refer to Moses again and again and say, "Why has Muhammad not been given the same which was given to Moses? i. e. miracles of the staff, the shining hand, etc. as if to suggest that you would readily believe only if you were shown the kind of the miracles that were shown by Moses to Pharaoh. But do you know what sort of response was made by those who were shown those miracles? They had not believed even after seeing the miracles, and had only said, "This is magic", for they were involved in stubbornness and hostility to the Truth. The same malady afflicts you today. Will you believe only when you are slowly the same kind of miracles? Then, do you know what fate the disbelievers had met even after seeing the miracles? They were annihilated by Allah. Do you now wish to meet the same doom by asking for the miracles in your obstinacy?
These were the things which were automatically impressed in the mind of every listener who heard this story in the pagan environment of Makkah, for a similar conflict was going on at that time between the Holy Prophet and disbelievers of Makkah as had already taken place between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh before. This was the background against which the story of the Prophet Moses was narrated so that a perfect analogy was established automatically in every detail between the conditions prevailing then in Makkah and those existing in the time of the Prophet Moses. Then, from verse 43 onward the discourse turns to the real theme.
In the first place, the narration of a two thousand year old historical event by the Holy Prophet with such accuracy and detail, is presented as a proof of his Prophet-hood although he was un-lettered and the people of his city and clan knew full well that he had no access to any source of such information as they could point out. Then his appointment as a Prophet is put forward as Allah's mercy to them, for they were heedless and Allah had made this arrangement for their guidance. Then their oft-repeated objection, "Why has not this Prophet brought the miracles which Moses had brought? " has been answered. It is said to them, "How can you be justified in demanding miracles from this Prophet when you did not believe in Moses either, who, as you yourselves acknowledge, had brought miracles from God? You can still see the truth only if you do not serve your lusts and whims. But if you remained afflicted with this malady, you would never see it even though you were shown any kind of miracles. "
Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned and put to shame for an event that occurred in those very days. Some Christians had come to Makkah and embraced Islam when they heard the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet. Instead of learning any lesson from this the Makkans were so upset at this that their leader, Abu Jahl, disgraced those people publicly. In conclusion, the excuse that the disbelievers put forward for not believing in the Holy Prophet has been dealt with. What they feared was this: "If we give up the polytheistic creed of the Arabs and accept the doctrine of Tauhid instead, this will put an end to our supremacy in the religious, political and economic fields,

which, in turn, will destroy our position of the most influential tribe of Arabia and we shall be left with no refuge anywhere in the land. " As this was the real motive of the chiefs of the Quraish for their antagonism towards the Truth, and their doubts and objections were only the pretenses, which they invented to deceive the common people, Allah has dealt with these fully till the end of the Surah, considered each aspect of these in a wise manner and offered the remedy for their basic ailment due to which those people judged the Truth and falsehood only from the viewpoint of their worldly interests.

29. Ankaboot:

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 41 in which the word Ankaboot (Spider) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Verses 56 to 60 clearly show that this Surah was sent down a little before the migration to Habash, and this is supported by the internal evidence of the subject matter as well. Some commentators have opined that since it mentions the hypocrites, and hypocrisy appeared in Madinah, the first ten verses of this Surah were revealed at Madinah and the rest of it at Makkah; whereas the people whose hypocrisy has been mentioned here are those who had adopted a hypocritical way of life because they were afraid of the oppression and extreme physical torture to which the Muslims were being subjected by the disbelievers. Evidently, this kind of hypocrisy could be there only at Makkah and not at Madinah. Similarly, some other commentators, seeing that in this Surah the Muslims have been exhorted to migrate, have regarded it as the last Surah to be revealed at Makkah, whereas the Muslims had migrated to Habash even before their migration to Madinah. These opinions are not based on any tradition but on the internal evidence of the subject matter, and this
internal evidence, when considered against the subject matter of the Surah as a whole, points to the conditions prevailing in the time of the migration to Habash and not to the last stage at Makkah.

Theme and Subject matter

A perusal of the Surah shows that the period of its revelation was the period of extreme persecution of the Muslims at Makkah. The disbelievers were opposing and fighting Islam tooth and nail and the new converts were being subjected to the severest oppression. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this Surah to strengthen and encourage the sincere Muslims as well as to put to shame those who were showing weakness of the faith. Besides, the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened and warned not to invite for themselves the fate that the antagonists of the Truth have been experiencing in every age.

In this connection, the questions that some young men were facing in those days, have also been answered. For instance, their parents were urging them to abandon Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), and return to their ancestral religion, for

they argued: "The Qur'an in which you have put your faith, regards the rights of the parents as the uppermost; therefore, listen to what we say; otherwise you will be working against the dictates of your own Faith. " This has been answered in verse 8.
Similarly, the people of some clans said to the new converts to Islam, "Leave the question of punishments, etc. , to us. Listen to us and abandon this man. If God seizes you in the Hereafter, we will come forward and say, 'Lord, these people are innocent: we had forced them to give up the Faith; therefore, seize us'. " This has been dealt with, in vv. 12-13.
The stories mentioned in this Surah also impress the same point mostly, as if to say, "Look at the Prophets of the past: they were made to suffer great hardships and were treated cruelly for long periods. Then, at last they were helped by Allah. Therefore, take heart: Allah's succor will certainly come. But a period of trial and tribulation has to be undergone. " Besides teaching this lesson to the Muslims, the disbelievers also have been warned, as if to say, "If you are not being immediately seized by Allah, you should not form the wrong impression that you will never be seized. The signs of the doomed nations of the past are before you. Just see how they met their doom and how Allah succoured the Prophets. "
Then the Muslims have been instructed to the effect: "If you feel that the persecution has become unbearable for you, you should give up your homes, instead of giving up your Faith: Allah's earth is vast: seek a new place where you can worship Allah with the full peace of mind. "
Besides all this, the disbelievers also have been urged to understand Islam. The realities of Tauhid and the Hereafter have been impressed with rational arguments, shirk have been refuted, and drawing their attention towards the signs in the universe, they have been told that all these Signs confirm the teachings that the Prophet is presenting before them.

30. Rum:

Name
The Surah takes its name Ar-Rum from the second verse in which the words ghulibat-ir-Rum have occurred.
Period of Revelation
The period of the revelation of this Surah is determined absolutely by the historical event that has been mentioned at the outset. It says: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land. "In those days the Byzantine occupied territories adjacent to Arabia were Jordan, Syria and Palestine, and in these territories the Romans were completely overpowered by the Iranians in 615 A. D. Therefore, it can be said with absolute certainty that this Surah was sent down in the same year, and this was the year in which the migration to Habash took place.
Historical Background
The prediction made in the initial verses of this Surah is one of the most outstanding evidences of the Quran's being the Word of Allah and the Holy Prophet Muhammad's

being a true Messenger of Allah. Let us have a look at the historical background relevant to the verses.

Eight years before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet the Byzantine Emperor Maurice was overthrown by Phocus, who captured the throne and became king. Phocus first got the Emperor's five sons executed in front of him, and then got the Emperor also killed and hung their heads in a thoroughfare in Constantinople. A few days after this he had the empress and her three daughters also put to death. The event provided Khusrau Parvez, the Sassanid king of Iran; a good moral excuse to attack Byzantium. For Emperor Maurice had been his benefactor; with his help he had got the throne of Iran. Therefore, he declared that he would avenge his godfather's and his children's murder upon Phocus, the usurper. So, he started war against Byzantium in 603 A. D. and within a few years, putting the Phocus armies to rout in succession, he reached Edessa (modern, Urfa) in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and Aleppo and Antioch in Syria, on the other. When the Byzantine ministers saw that Phocus could not save the country, they sought the African governor's help, who sent his son, Heraclius, to Constantinople with a strong fleet. Phocus was immediately deposed and Heraclius made emperor. He treated Phocus as he had treated Maurice. This happened in 610 A. D. , the year the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophet-hood.

The moral excuse for which Khusrau Parvez had started the war was no more valid after the deposition and death of Phocus. Had the object of his war really been to avenge the murder of his ally on Phocus for his cruelty, he would have come to terms with the new Emperor after the death of Phocus. But he continued the war, and gave it the color of a crusade between Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The sympathies of the Christian sects (i. e. Nestorians and Jacobians, etc.) which had been excommunicated by the Roman ecclesiastical authority and tyrannized for years also went with the Magian (Zoroastrian) invaders, and the Jews also joined hands with them; so much so that the number of the Jews who enlisted in Khusrau's army rose up to 26, 000.

Heraclius could not stop this storm. The very first news that he received from the East after ascending the throne was that of the Iranian occupation of Antioch. After this Damascus fell in 613 A. D. Then in 614 A. D. the Iranians occupying Jerusalem played havoc with the Christian world. Ninety thousand Christians were massacred and the Holy Sepulchre was desecrated. The Original Cross on which, according to the Christian belief, Jesus had died was seized and carried to Mada'in. The chief priest Zacharia was taken prisoner and all the important churches of the city were destroyed. How puffed up was Khusrau Parvez at this victory can be judged from the letter that he wrote to Heraclius from Jerusalem. He wrote: "From Khusrau, the greatest of all gods, the master of the whole world : To Heraclius, his most wretched and most stupid servant: 'You say that you have trust in your Lord. why didn't then your Lord save Jerusalem from me? '"

Within a year after this victory the Iranian armies over-ran Jordan, Palestine and the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, and reached the frontiers of Egypt. In those very days another conflict of a far greater historical consequence was going on in Makkah. The

believers in One God, under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), were fighting for their existence against the followers of shirk under the command of the chiefs of the Quraish, and the conflict had reached such a stage that in 615 A. D. , a substantial number of the Muslims had to leave their homes and take refuge with the Christian kingdom of Habash, which was an ally of the Byzantine Empire. In those days the Sassanid victories against Byzantium were the talk of the town, and the pagans of Makkah were delighted and were taunting the Muslims to the effect: "Look the fire worshippers of Iran are winning victories and the Christian believers in Revelation and Prophet-hood are being routed everywhere. Likewise, we, the idol worshippers of Arabia, will exterminate you and your religion. "

These were the conditions when this Surah of the Quran was sent down, and in it a prediction was made, saying: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious. And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah. " It contained not one but two predictions: First, the Romans shall be Victorious; and second, the Muslims also shall win a victory at the same time. Apparently, there was not a remote chance of the fulfillment of the either prediction in the next few years. On the one hand, there were a handful of the Muslims, who were being beaten and tortured in Makkah, and even till eight years after this prediction there appeared no chance of their victory and domination. On the other, the Romans were losing more and more ground every next day. By 619 A. D. the whole of Egypt had passed into Sassanid hands and the Magian armies had reached as far as Tripoli. In Asia Minor they beat and pushed back the Romans to Bosporus, and in 617 A. D. they captured Chalcedon (modern, Kadikoy) just opposite Constantinople. The Emperor sent an envoy to Khusrau, praying that he was ready to have peace on any terms, but he replied, "I shall not give protection to the emperor until he is brought in chains before me and gives up obedience to his crucified god and adopts submission to the fire god. " At last, the Emperor became so depressed by defeat that he decided to leave Constantinople and shift to Carthage (modern, Tunis). In short, as the British historian Gibbon says, even seven to eight years after this prediction of the Quran, the conditions were such that no one could even imagine that the Byzantine Empire would ever gain an upper hand over Iran. Not to speak of gaining domination, no one could hope that the Empire, under the circumstances, would even survive.

When these verses of the Quran were sent down, the disbelievers of Makkah made great fun of them, and Ubayy bin Khalaf bet Hadrat Abu Bakr ten camels if the Romans became victorious within three years. When the Holy Prophet came to know of the bet, he said, "The Quran has used the words bid`i sinin, and the word bid in Arabic applies to a number up to ten. Therefore, make the bet for ten years and increase the number of camels to a hundred. " So, Hadrat Aba Bakr spoke to Ubayy again and bet a hundred camels for ten years.

In 622 A. D. as the Holy Prophet migrated to Madinah, the Emperor Heraclius set off quietly for Trabzon from Constantinople via the Black Sea and started preparations to

attack Iran from rear. For this he asked the Church for money, and Pope Sergius lent him the Church collections on interest, in a bid to save Christianity from Zoroastrianism. Heraclius started his counter attack in 623 A. D. from Armenia. Next year, in 624 A. D. , he entered Azerbaijan and destroyed Clorumia, the birthplace of Zoroaster, and ravaged the principal fire temple of Iran. Great are the powers of Allah, this was the very year when the Muslims achieved a decisive victory at Badr for the first time against the mushriks. Thus both the predictions made in Surah Rum were fulfilled simultaneously within the stipulated period of ten years.

The Byzantine forces continued to press the Iranians hard and in the decisive battle at Nineveh (627 A. D.) they dealt them the hardest blow. They captured the royal residence of Dastagerd, and then pressing forward reached right opposite to Ctesiphon, capital of Iran in those days. In 628 A. D. in an internal revolt, Khusrau Parvez was imprisoned and 18 of his sons were executed in front of him and a few days later he himself died in the prison. This was the year when the peace treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, which the Quran has termed as "the supreme victory", and in this very year Khusrau's son, Qubad II, gave up all the occupied Roman territories, restored the True Cross and made peace with Byzantium. In 628 A. D. , the Empcror himself went to Jerusalem to install the "Holy Cross" in its place, and in the same year the Holy Prophet entered Makkah for the first time after the Hijrah to perform the Umra-tul-Qadaa'.

After this no one could have any doubt about the truth of the prophecy of the Quran, with the result that most of the Arab polytheists accepted Islam. The heirs of Ubayy bin Khalaf lost their bet and had to give a hundred camels to Hadrat Abu Bakr Siddiq. He took them before the Holy Prophet, who ordered that they be given away in charity, because the bet had been made at a time when gambling had not yet been forbidden by the Shariah; now it was forbidden. Therefore, the bet was allowed to be accepted from the belligerent disbelievers, but instruction given that it should be given away in charity and should not be brought in personal use.

Theme and Subject matter

The discourse begins with the theme that the Romans have been overcome and the people the world over think that the empire is about to collapse, but the fact is that within a few years the tables will be turned and the vanquished will again become victorious.

This introductory theme contains the great truth that man is accustomed to seeing only what is apparent and superficial. That which is behind the apparent and superficial he does not know. When in the petty matters of life, this habit to see only the apparent and superficial can lead man to misunderstandings and miscalculations, and when he is liable to make wrong estimates only due to lack of knowledge about "what will happen tomorrow", how stupendous will be his error if he risks his whole life-activity by placing reliance only upon what is visible and apparent with respect to his worldly life as a whole. Then, from the question of the conflict between Byzantium and Iran the direction of the discourse turns to the theme of the Hereafter, and as far as verse 27, man has been made to understand in different ways that the Hereafter is possible as well

as rational and necessary; then for the sake of keeping the system of his life also stable and balanced it is absolutely necessary that he should plan and order his present life on the faith in the Hereafter; otherwise he will commit the same error as has always been the result of placing one's reliance only upon the apparent and the visible.

In this connection, the Signs of the universe which have been presented as evidence to prove the doctrine of the Hereafter arc precisely the same which support the doctrine of Tauhid. Therefore from verse 28 onward, the discourse turns to the affirmation of Tauhid and the refutation of shirk, and it is stressed that the natural way of life for man is none else but to serve One God exclusively. Shirk is opposed to the nature of the universe as to the nature of man. Therefore, whenever man has adopted this deviation, chaos has resulted. Again here, an allusion has been made to the great chaos that had gripped the world on account of the war between the two major powers of the time, and it has been indicated that this chaos too, is the result of shirk, and all the nations who were ever involved in mischief and chaos in the history of mankind were also mushriks.

In conclusion, a parable has been presented to make the people understand that just as dead earth comes to life, all of a sudden, by a shower of rain sent by God and swells with vegetation and plant life, so is the case with the dead humanity. When God sends a shower of His mercy in the form of Revelation and Prophet-hood, it also gives a new life to mankind and causes it to grow and develop and flourish. Therefore: "If you take full advantage of this opportunity, the barren land of Arabia will bloom by Allah's mercy and the whole advantage will be your. But if you do not take advantage of it, you will harm only your selves. Then no regret will avail and no opportunity will be provided to make amends. "

31. Luqmaan:

Name

The Surah has been named Luqmaan after Luqmaan the Sage, whose admonitions to his son have been related in vv. 12-19 of this Surah.

Period of Revelation

A perusal of the subject matter shows that it was sent down in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islam had begun and every sort of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by vv. 14, 15, in which the young converts to Islam have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God, they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islam, or compelled them to revert to the creed of shirk and polytheism. The same thing has been said in Surah Al-Ankaboot, which indicates that both these Surahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject matter of the two Surahs on the whole, however, shows that Surah Luqmaan was sent down earlier, for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background though, contrary to this, while studying Surah Al-Ankaboot one can clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

Theme and Subject matter

In this Surah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of shirk and the truth and reasonableness of Tauhid, and they have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, consider with a cool mind the teachings which the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting from the Lord of the worlds, and see with open eyes the manifest Signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves, which bear evidence to its truth.

In this connection, it has also been pointed out that this is not a new teaching which might have been, presented in the world, or in the land of Arabia, for the first time, and with which the people might be unfamiliar. The learned and wise people of the past ages said and taught the same thing which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is teaching today. It is as if to say, "O people: In your own country there has lived a wise man, named Luqmaan, whose wisdom has been well known among you, whose proverbs and wise sayings are cited in your daily conversation and who is often quoted by your poets and orators. Now you should see for yourselves what creed and what morals he used to teach. "

32. Sajdah:

Name

The Surah has been entitled As-Sajdah after the theme of Sajdah (prostration) as expressed in verse 15.

Period of Revelation

From the style of the Surah it appears that it was sent down during the middle Makkah period, more particularly in its initial stage, for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Surahs sent down in the later stages.

Theme and Topics

The main theme of the Surah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning Tauhid, the Hereafter and the Prophet-hood, and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah, when they talked of the Holy Prophet in private, said to one another, "This person is forging strange things sometimes he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: when you have become dust, you will be called to render your accounts, and there will be Hell and Heaven. Sometimes he says: these gods and goddesses and saints are nonentities: One God alone is the Deity. And sometimes he says: the discourses which I recite are not my own but Allah's Word. All these are strange things which he presents. "The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject matter of this Surah.

In this connection, the disbelievers have been told: "Most certainly it is Allah's Word, which has been sent down in order to arouse a people who are sunk in heedlessness, being deprived of the bounties and blessings of Prophet-hood. How can you call it a fabrication when its having been sent dawn from Allah is manifest and self-evident? "

Then, they have been asked, "Use your common sense and judge for yourselves which of the things presented by the Quran is strange and novel? Look at the administration of the heavens and the earth: consider your own creation and structure. Don't these things testify to the teaching which this Prophet is presenting before you in the Quran? Does the system of the universe point to Tauhid or to shirk? When you consider this whole system and your own creation, does your intellect testify that the One Who has given you your present existence, will not be able to create you once again? "

Then a scene of the Hereafter has been depicted, the fruits of belief and the evil consequences of disbelief have been mentioned and the people exhorted to give up disbelief even before they meet their doom and accept the teaching of the Quran, which will be to their own advantage in the Hereafter. Then they have been told: It is Allah's supreme Mercy that He does not seize man immediately for his errors to punish him finally and decisively but warns him beforehand by afflicting him with small troubles and hardships and calamities and losses and strokes of misfortune so that he may wake up and take admonition.

Then it is said: "This is not the first and novel event of its kind that a Book has been sent down upon a man from God. Before this the Book had been sent upon Moses also, which you all know. There is nothing strange in this at which you should marvel. Be assured that this Book has come down from God, and note it well that the same will happen now as has already happened in the time of Moses. Leadership now will be bestowed only on those who will accept this Divine Book. Those who reject it shall be doomed to failure. "

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "See the end of the doomed communities of the past by whose ruined habitations you pass during your trade journeys. Will you like to meet the same doom yourself? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) except a few young men and some slaves and poor men, and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere just by a single shower of the rain though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage? "

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "These people mock at what you say and ask as to when you will attain this decisive victory. Tell them: when the time comes for the final judgment regarding you and us, believing then will not profit you at all. If you have to believe, believe now. But if you intend to await the final judgment, then await it as you please. "

33. Ahzab:

Name

The Surah derives its name Al-Ahzab from verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The Surah discusses three important events which are: the Battle of the Trench (or Al-Ahzab: the Clans), which took place in Shawwal, A. H. 5; the raid on Bani Quraizah, which was made in Dhil-Qa'dah, A. H. 5; and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab, which also was contracted in Dhil-Qa'dah, A. H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Surah.

Historical Background

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uhud (A. H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months had passed then the tribe of Bani Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madinah, and the Holy Prophet had to dispatch an expedition under Abu Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A. H. 4 some people of the tribes of Adal and Qarah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Raji (a place between Rabigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Hadrat Khubaib bin Adi and Hadrat Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Bani Amir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansaar young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of Usayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwan, tribes of Bani Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bir Maunah (Mautah??) and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Bani an-Nadir of Madinah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabi'ul Awwal, AH 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamadi al-Ula, A. H. 4, Bani Thalbah and Bani Muharib, the two tribes of Bani Ghatafan, started making preparations to attack Madinah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

However, it was the Holy Prophet's determination and wisdom and his great Companions' spirit of sacrifice that changed these adverse conditions completely within a short span of time. The economic boycott by the Arabs had made life hard for the people of Madinah. All the polytheistic tribes around Madinah were becoming rebellious. Inside Madinah itself the Jews and the hypocrites were beat upon mischief. But the successive steps taken by a handful of the sincere Muslims, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, not only restored the image of strength of Islam in Arabia but also increased it manifold.

Raids Preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the Battle of Uhud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and

dear ones was being mourned in many houses, and the Holy Prophet himself was injured and sad at the martyrdom of his uncle, Hadrat Hamzah, he called out to the devoted servants of Islam to accompany him in pursuit of the pagans so as to deter them from returning and attacking Madinah again. The Holy Prophet's assessment was absolutely correct. He knew that, although the Quraish had retreated without taking any advantage of their almost complete victory, they would certainly regret their folly when they would halt and consider the whole matter coolly on the way, and would return to attack Madinah again. Therefore, he decided to go in pursuit of them, and 630 of the Muslims at once volunteered to accompany him. When they reached Hamra al-Asad on the way to Makkah and camped there for three days, the Holy Prophet came to know through a sympathetic non-Muslim that Abu Sufyan had stayed at Ar-Rauha, 36 miles short of Madinah, with an army 2, 978 strong: they were regretting their error and were, in fact, planning to return and attack Madinah once again. But when they heard that the Holy Prophet was coming in pursuit of them with an army, they lost heart and gave up their plan. Thus, not only were the Quraish deterred by this action but the other enemies living around Madinah also realized that the Muslims were being led by a person, who was highly well informed, wise and resolute, and that the Muslims were ever ready to lay down their lives at his command. (For further details, see Introduction to Surah Al Imran.

Then as soon as the Bani Asad started making Preparations for a raid on Madinah, the Holy Prophet's secret agents gave him timely information about their intention. Thus, before they could come in force to attack Madinah, he sent an army 150 strong, under Hadrat Abu Salamah (the first husband of Hadrat Umm Salamah) to punish them. They took Bani Asad by surprise, who fled in panic leaving all their possessions behind, which fell into the Muslim hands.

After this came the turn of the Bani an-Nadir. The day they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet, and the secret was disclosed, the Holy Prophet ordered them to leave Madinah within ten days and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Madinah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Madinah. He even promised to help them with 2, 000 men, and assured them that the Bani Ghatafan from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Bani an-Nadir sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Holy Prophet might do.

As soon as the time limit of ten days come to an end, the Holy Prophet laid siege to their quarters, but none of their supporters had the courage to come to their rescue. At last, they surrendered on condition that every three of them would be allowed to load a camel with whatever they could carry and go away leaving the rest of their possessions behind. Thus, the whole suburbs of the city which were inhabited by the Bani an-Nadir, and their gardens and their fortresses and other properties fell to the Muslims, and the people of this treacherous tribe became scattered in Khaibar, Wad il Qura and Syria.

Then the Holy Prophet turned his attention to the Bani Ghatafan, who were preparing for a war against Madinah. He took 400 of the Muslims and overtook them at Dhat ar-

Riqaa`. They were so taken by surprise that they fled their houses without a struggle and took refuge in the mountains.

After this in Shaban A. H. 4, the Holy Prophet went forth to Badr to fight Abu Sufyan. At the end of the Battle of Uhud, he had challenged the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, saying, "We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year. " In reply the Holy Prophet announced through a Companion: "All right: we accept your challenge. " Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1, 500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abu Sufyan left Makkah with an army of 2, 000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-az-Zahran (modern, Wadi Fatimah). The Holy Prophet waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uhud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dumat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between Iraq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabi al-Awwal, A. H. 5, the Holy Prophet himself went to punish them with an army of 1, 000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al-Madinah was formidable and could no longer be resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

The Battle of the Trench

Such were the conditions when the Battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Madinah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the Bani an-Nadir, who had settled in Khaibar after their banishment from Madinah. They went round to the Quraish and Ghatafan and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Madinah jointly. Thus, in Shawwal, A. H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Madinah. From the north came Jews of Bani an-Nadir and Bani Qainuqaa` who after their banishment from Madinah, had settled in Khaibar and Wad il Qura. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghatafan, Bani Sulaim, Fazarah, Murrah, Ashja, Sad, Asad, etc. and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Holy Prophet was not unaware of this in Madinah. His intelligence men and the sympathizers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements. Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Madinah in six days, and having the Mount Salat their back, took up a defensive position with 3, 000 men in the protection of the

Trench. To the south of Madinah there were many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Holy Prophet had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Madinah. This kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

After this, only one alternative remained with the disbelievers: to incite the Jewish tribe of Bani Quraizah, who inhabited the south eastern part of the city, to rebellion. As the Muslims had entered a treaty with them that in case of an attack on Madinah they would defend the city along with them, the Muslims had made no defensive arrangement there and had even sent their families to take shelter in the forts situated on that side. The invaders perceived this weakness of the Islamic defenses. They sent Huyayy bin Akhtab, the Jewish leader of the Bani an-Nadir, to the Bani Quraizah so as to induce them to break the treaty and join the war. In the beginning, they refused to oblige and said that they had a treaty with Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) who had faithfully abided by it and given them no cause for complaint. But when Ibn Akhtab said to them, "Look, I have summoned the united force of entire Arabia against him: this is a perfect opportunity to get rid of him. If you lose it, you will never have another opportunity, " the anti Islamic Jewish mind prevailed over every moral consideration and the Bani Quraizah were persuaded to break the treaty.

The Holy Prophet received news of this. He at once told Sad bin Ubadah, Sad bin Mu`adh, Abdullah bin Rawahah and Khawwat bin Jubair, chiefs of the Ansaar, to go and find out the truth. He advised them that if they found Bani Quraizah still loyal to the treaty, they should return and say so openly before the Muslim army; however, if they found that they were bent upon treachery they should only inform him so that the common Muslims would not be disheartened. On reaching there the Companions found the Bani Quraizah fully bent on mischief They told the Companions openly, "There is no agreement and no treaty between us and Muhammad. " At this they returned to the Islamic army and submitted their report to the Holy Prophet, saying, "'Adal and Qarah. " That is, "The Quraizah are bent upon doing what the Adal and Qarah had done with the preachers of Islam at Raji. "

This news spread among the Muslims and caused great consternation among them, for they had been encircled and their city had been endangered on the side where there existed no defensive arrangement and where they had also sent their families to take shelter in the forts. This further increased the activities of the hypocrites and they started making psychological attacks to break the morale of the Muslims. One said, "How strange! We were being foretold that the lands of Caesar and Chosroes would fall to us, but here we are that not one of us can go out even to relieve himself. " Another one asked for permission to leave his post at the Trench so that he could go and protect his own house which was in danger. Another one started making secret propaganda to

the effect: "Settle your affair with the invaders yourselves and hand over Muhammad to them. " This was a highly critical hour of trial, which exposed every person who harbored any hypocrisy in his heart. Only the true and sincere Muslims remained firm and steadfast in their resolve and devotion.

The Holy Prophet at that critical moment initiated peace negotiations with the Ban Ghatafan and tried to persuade them to accept one third of the fruit harvest of Madinah and withdraw. But when he asked Sad bin Ubadah and Sad bin Mu`aadh, chief of the Ansaar, for their opinion about the conditions of peace, they said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is it your personal wish that we should agree on these conditions, or is it Allah's Command that we have no option but to accept it? Or, are you giving this proposal only in order to save us from the enemy? " The Holy Prophet replied, "I am proposing this only to save you: I see that the whole of Arabia has formed a united front against you. I want to divide the enemy. " At this the two chiefs protested; saying, "Sir, if you want to conclude this pact for our sake, kindly forget it. These tribes could not subdue us under tribute when we were polytheists. Now that we have the honor of believing in Allah and His Messenger, will they make us sink to this depth of ignominy? The sword now shall be the arbiter till Allah passes His judgment between them and us. " With these words they tore up the draft for the treaty which had not yet been signed.

In the meantime Nu`aim bin Masud, a member of the Ashja branch of the Ghatafan tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Holy Prophet and submitted: "No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please. " The Holy Prophet replied: "Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy. "' So, first of all, Nu`aim went to the Quraizah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, "The Quraish and the Ghatafan can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what will be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you. " This had the desired effect upon the Bani Quraizah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the Quraish and the Ghatafan and said to them, "The Bani Quraizah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them. " This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Bani Quraizah.

and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides. " The Bani Quraizah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages. " The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nu`aim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Bani Quraizah, on the other side, also felt that Nu`aim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet, finding the battlefield completely empty, said: "The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this: now you will take the offensive. " This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Madinah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

Raid on Bani Quraizah

When the Holy Prophet returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the Divine Command the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Bani Quraizah as well. On receipt of this Command, the Holy Prophet got announced: "Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his Asr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Bani Quraizah. " Immediately after this, he dispatched Hadrat Ali with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Quraizah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery.

They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Madinah. When they saw the contingent of Hadrat Ali, they thought that they had come only to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Holy Prophet himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks.

At last, they surrendered themselves to the Holy Prophet on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Hadrat Sad bin Mu`aadh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Hadrat Sad as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraizah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Madinah as had happened in the case of the Bani Qainuqaa` and the Bani an-Nadir before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Hadrat Sad treat their previous allies leniently.

But Hadrat Sad had just experienced and seen how the two Jewish tribes who had been allowed to leave Madinah previously had instigated the other tribes living around Madinah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed that all the male members of the

Quraizah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims.

The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1, 500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2, 000 spears and 1, 500 shields in order to join the war. If Allah's succor had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Madinah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Hadrat Sad concerning those people was absolutely correct.

Social Reforms

Though the period of two years between the Battles of Uhud and the Trench was a period of disturbance and turmoil and the Holy Prophet and his Companions could hardly relax in peace and security even for a day, the work of reform as a whole and the reconstruction of the Muslim society continued uninterrupted. This was the time when the Islamic laws pertaining to marriage and divorce were complemented; the law of inheritance was introduced, drinking and gambling were prohibited, and the new laws and regulations concerning many other aspects of the economic and social life were enforced.

In this connection, an important thing that needed to be reformed was the question of the adoption of a son. Whoever was adopted by the Arabs as a son was regarded as one of their own offspring: he got share in inheritance; he was treated like a real son and real brother by the adopted mother and the adopted sister; he could not marry the daughter of his adopted father and his widow after his death. And the same was the case if the adopted son died or divorced a wife. The adopted father regarded the woman as his real daughter-in-law. This custom clashed in every detail with the laws of marriage and divorce and inheritance enjoined by Allah in Surahs Al-Baqarah and An-Nisa. It made a person who could get no share in inheritance entitled to it at the expense of those who were really entitled to it. It prohibited marriage between the men and the women who could contract marriage perfectly lawfully. And, above all, it helped spread the immoralities which the Islamic Law wanted to eradicate. For a real mother and a real sister and a real daughter cannot be like the adopted mother and the adopted sister and the adopted daughter, however one may try to sanctify the adopted relations as a custom. When the artificial relations endued with customary sanctity are allowed to mix freely like the real relations, it cannot but produce evil results. That is why the Islamic law of marriage and divorce, the law of inheritance and the law of the prohibition of adultery required that the concept and custom of regarding the adopted son as the real son should be eradicated completely.

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, The adopted son is not the real son. The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked

upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely. Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Holy Prophet himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Holy Prophet himself, and done by him under Allah's Command, could be detestable. Therefore, a little before the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Harithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this Command during the siege of the Bani Quraizah. (The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Holy Prophet had to become busy in the preparation for war).

Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Hadrat Zainab

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Holy Prophet. The polytheists, the hypocrites and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the Battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god send for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muhammad, God forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Hadrat Zainab was the Holy Prophet's first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Hadrat Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Hadrat Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Holy Prophet's command. The marriage was solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Holy Prophet had in reality any desire for Hadrat Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Hadrat Zaid; he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicized them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

Preliminary Commandments of Purdah

The fact that the tales invented by the enemies also became topics of conversation among the Muslims was a clear sign that the element of sensuality in society had crossed all limits. If this malady had not been there, it was not possible that minds would have paid any attention whatever to such absurd and disgusting stories about a righteous and pure person like the Holy Prophet. This was precisely the occasion when

the reformative Commandments pertaining to the law of Hijab or Purdah were first enforced in the Islamic society. These reforms were introduced in this Surah and complemented a year later in Surah An-Noor, when a slander was made on the honor of Hadrat Aishah. (For further details, see Introduction to Surah An-Noor).

Domestic Affairs of the Holy Prophet

There were two other problems which needed attention at that time. Though apparently they pertained to the Holy Prophet's domestic life, it was necessary to resolve them for the domestic and mental peace of the person, who was exerting every effort to promote the cause of Allah's Religion and was day and night absorbed in this great mission. Therefore, Allah took these two problems also officially in His own hand.

The first problem was that economically the Holy Prophet at that time was in straitened circumstances. During the first four years he had no source of income whatever. In 4 A. H. after the banishment of the Bani an-Nadir, a portion of their evacuated lands was reserved for his use by the Command of Allah, but it was not enough for his family requirements. On the other hand, the duties of the office of Prophet-hood were so onerous that they were absorbing all his energies of the mind and body and heart and every moment of his time, and he could not make any effort at all for earning his livelihood. In conditions such as these when his wives happened to disturb his mental peace because of economic hardships he would feel doubly strained and taxed.

The other problem was that before marrying Hadrat Zainab, he had four wives already in the houses: Hadrat Saudah, Hadrat Aishah, Hadrat Hafsah, and Hadrat Umm Salamah. Hadrat Zainab was his fifth wife. At this the opponents raised the objection, and the Muslims also started entertaining doubts, that as for others it had been forbidden to keep more than four wives at a time, but how the Holy Prophet himself had taken a fifth wife also.

Subject Matter and Topics

These were the questions that were engaging the attention of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims at the time Surah Al-Ahzab was revealed, and replies to the same form the subject matter of this Surah.

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Surah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Surah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

-1. Verses 1-8 seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the historical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Hadrat Zainab. The Holy Prophet was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and

considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Hadrat Zaid then, the hypocrites and the Jews and the mushriks who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1-8.

-2. In verses 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Bani Quraizah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.

-3. The discourse contained in vv. 28-35 consists of two parts. In the first part, Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Holy Prophet, who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, and Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should cooperate with Allah and His messenger and bear patiently. " In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds molded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Holy Prophet himself and his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre Islamic days of ignorance,, to remain in their houses with dignity, and to exercise great caution in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the Commandments of Purdah.

-4. Verses 36-48 deal with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Holy Prophet's position and status; and the Holy Prophet himself has been counseled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

-5. In verse 49 a clause of the law of divorce has been laid down. This is a unique verse which was sent down on some occasion probably in connection with the same events.

-6. In verses 50-52 a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Holy Prophet, which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.

-7. In verses 53-55 the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Holy Prophet's wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit the holy wives in their houses; as for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Holy Prophet's wives were forbidden for the Muslims like their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.

-8. In verses 56-57 warning was given to stop criticizing the Holy Prophet's marriage and his domestic life, and the believers instructed not to indulge in fault finding like the enemies of Islam, but to invoke the blessings of Allah for their Prophet; moreover, they

were instructed that they should avoid falsely accusing one another even among themselves, not to speak of the person of the Prophet.
-9. In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.
After this till the end of the Surah the hypocrites and other foolish and mean people have been rebuked for the propaganda that they were carrying on at that time against Islam and the Muslims.

34. Sabaa:

Name
The Surah takes its name from verse 15 in which the word Sabaa has occurred, which implies that it is the Surah in which mention has been made of Sabaa (i. e. the Sabaeans).
Period of Revelation
The exact period of its revelation is not known from any reliable tradition. However, the style shows that it is either the middle or the early Makkan period. If it is the middle period, it was probably its initial stage when the persecution had not yet become tyrannical and the Islamic movement was being suppressed only by resort to derision and ridicule, rumor mongering, false allegations and casting of evil suggestions in the people's minds.
Theme and Subject Matter
The Surah deals with those objections of the disbelievers, which they were raising against the Holy Prophet's message of Tauhid and the Hereafter, and about his Prophet-hood itself, mostly in the form of absurd allegations and taunts and mockery. These objections have been answered, sometimes by citing them and sometimes without citing them, and the discourse itself shows which objection is being answered at a particular place. The answers mostly take the form of instruction and admonition and argument, but at some places the disbelievers have been warned also of the evil consequences, of their stubbornness. In this connection, the stories of the Sabaeans and the Prophets David and Solomon have been related to impress this lesson: "You have both these historical precedents before you. On the one hand, there were the Prophets David and Solomon, who had been blessed by Allah with great powers and such grandeur and glory as had been granted to hardly any people before them. In spite of this, they were not proud and arrogant, but remained grateful servants of their Lord. They were never rebellious. On the other hand, there were the people of Sabaa, who, when blessed by Allah, became proud, and were consequently so thoroughly destroyed and dispersed as to be remembered only in myths and legends. With these precedents in view, you may see and judge for yourselves as to which bind of the life is better: that which is built on belief in Tauhid and the Hereafter and the attitude of gratefulness to Allah, or that which is based on disbelief and shirk and denial of the Hereafter and the worship of the world. "

35. Faatir:

Name

The word Faatir of the first very verse is the title given to this Surah, which simply means that it is a Surah in which the word Faatir has occurred. The other name is Al Malaika, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Sarah is probably the middle Makkan period, and especially that part of it, when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet.

Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had then adopted towards the Holy Prophet's message of Tauhid, like a well wisher, and also to admonish them like a teacher, as if to say: "O foolish people, the way to which this Prophet is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him.

Just consider and ponder over what he says : there is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates shirk. If you look around carefully, you will yourself realize that there is no basis for shirk in the world. He presents the doctrine of Tauhid. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority.

He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you thing a little you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless.

Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night. How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God Who created you from an insignificant sperm drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike?

Then think and judge for yourselves as to what is reasonable : should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil?

Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet will not lose anything. It is you yourselves only who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which be has done".

In this connection, the Holy Prophet has been consoled again and again, as if to say : "When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any

responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way". Furthermore, he has also been consoled to the effect "You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the rights path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you".
The believers also, in this connection, have been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.

36. Yaasin:

Name
The Surah takes its name from the two letters of the alphabet with which it begins.
Period of Revelation
A study of the style shows that it was either sent down during the last stage of the middle Makkan period, or it is one of those Surahs, which were sent down during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's stay at Makkah.
Subject Matter and Theme
The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraish of the consequences of not believing in the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.
Arguments have been given for three things: (1) For tauhid, from the signs of the universe and from common sense; (2) for the Hereafter, from the signs of the universe, from common sense and from man's own existence itself; and (3) for the Prophet-hood of the Prophet Muhammad, from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive, and from this that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.
On the strength of these arguments, themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner, so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.
Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah and Tabarani have related on the authority of Hadrat Ma'qil bin Yasar that the Holy Prophet said: "Surah Ya Sin is the heart of the Qur'an. "This is similar to describing the Surah Al Fatihah as the Umm al Qur'an (the essence or core of the Qur'an), because Al Fatihah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Quran. The Surah Ya Sin has been called the throbbing heart of the Qur'an because it presents the message of the Qur'an in a most forceful manner, which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action.
Again Imam Ahmad, Aba Da'ud and Ibn Majah have related from the same Ma'qil bin Yasar that the Holy Prophet said: "Recite Surah Ya Sin to the dying ones among you. "

The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islamic creed in the mind of the dying person but also bring before him, in particular, a complete picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life. In view of this, it would be desirable that along with the recitation of the Surah Ya Sin its translation also is made for the benefit of the person who does not know Arabic so that the purpose of the admonition is duly fulfilled.

37. Saaffat:

Name

The name is derived from the word was saaffat with which the Surah begins.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style show that this Surah probably was sent down in the middle of the Makkan period, or perhaps in the last stage of the middle Makkan period. The style clearly indicates that antagonism is raging strong in the background and the Holy Prophet and his Companions are passing through very difficult and discouraging circumstances.

Subject Matter and Theme

The disbelievers of Makkah have been severely warned for their attitude of mockery and derision with which they were responding to the Holy Prophet's message of Tauhid and the Hereafter and for their utter refusal to accept and acknowledge his claim to Prophet-hood.

In the end, they have been plainly warned that the Prophet whom they are mocking and ridiculing will overwhelm them in spite of their power and pelf and they will find the army of Allah encamping in the very courtyards of their houses (vv. 171-179. This notice was given at a time when there appeared no chance whatever of the Holy Prophet's success and triumph.

The Muslims (who have been called Allah's army in these verses) were being made the target of severe persecution. Three-fourth of their population had already emigrated and hardly 40 to 50 of the Companions were left with the Holy Prophet in Makkah who were experiencing all sorts of the excesses with utter helplessness.

Under such circumstances, in view of the apparent conditions, no one could believe that the Holy Prophet and the handful of his ill equipped Companions would ultimately attain dominance. The people rather thought that the new movement would end and be buried in the ravines of Makkah. But hardly 15 to 16 years had passed when on the conquest of Makkah precisely the same thing happened of which the disbelievers had been forewarned.

Along with administering warnings, Allah in this Surah has done full justice also to the theme of inducement and instruction in a balanced way. Brief but impressive arguments have been given about the validity of the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. Criticism has been made of the creed of the mushrikin to show the absurdity of their beliefs; they have been informed of the evil consequences of their deviations, which have been contrasted with the splendid results of the faith and righteous acts. Then, in

continuation of the same, Precedents from past history have been cited to show how Allah had been treating His Prophets and their followers : how He has been favoring His faithful servants and punishing their deniers and rejectors.
The most instructive of the historical narratives presented in this Surah is the important event of the pious life of the Prophet Abraham, who became ready to sacrifice his only son as soon as he received an inspiration from Allah. In this there was a lesson not only for the disbelieving Quraish, who waxed proud of their blood relationship with him, but also for the Muslims who had believed in Allah and His Messenger. By narrating this event they were told what is the essence and the real spirit of Islam, and how a true believer should be ready to sacrifice his all for the pleasure and approval of Allah after he has adopted it as his Faith and Creed.
The last verses of the Surah were not only a warning for the disbelievers but also a good news for the believers who were passing through highly unfavorable and discouraging conditions on account of their supporting and following the Holy Prophet. In these verses they were given the good news that they should not be disheartened at the hardships and difficulties they had to encounter in the beginning, for in the end they alone would attain dominance, and the standard bearers of falsehood, who appeared to be dominant at the time would be overwhelmed and vanquished at their hands. A few years later the turn the events took, proved that it was not an empty consolation but an inevitable reality of which they had been foretold in order to strengthen their hearts.

38. Saad:

Name
The Surah takes its name from the alphabetic letter Suad with which it begins.
Period of Revelation
As will be explained below, according to some traditions this Surah was sent down in the period when the Holy Prophet had started calling the people openly to Islam in Makkah, and this had caused great alarm among the chiefs of the Quraish. If this be true, its period of revelation would be about the 4th year of the Prophet-hood. According to some other traditions, it was sent down after Hadrat Umar's embracing Islam, and this happened, as is well known, after the migration to Habash. Another chain of the traditions shows that the event which occasioned the revelation of this Surah took place during the last illness of Abu Talib. If this be correct, the period of its revelation would be the 10th or 11th year of the Prophet-hood.
Historical Background
Here is a resume of the traditions related by Imam Ahmad, Nasa'i, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn Aba Hatim, Muhammad bin Ishaq and others:
When Abu Talib fell ill, and the Quraish chiefs knew that his end was near, they held consultations and decided to approach the old chief with the request that he should solve the dispute between them and his nephew. For they feared that if Abu Talib died and then they subjected Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to a harsh treatment, after his death, the Arabs would taunt them, saying, "They were afraid of the old chief

as long as he lived now that he is dead they have started maltreating his nephew. " At least 25 of the Quraish chiefs including Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Umayyah bin Khalaf, As bin Wa'il, Aswad bin al-Muttalib, 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, Utbah and Shaibah went to Abu Talib.

First, they put before him their complaints against the Holy Prophet as usual, then said, "We have come to present before you a just request and it is this : let your nephew leave us to our religion, and we shall leave him to his. He may worship whomever he may please: we shall not stand in his way in this matter; but he should not condemn our gods, and should not try to force us to give them up. Please tell him to make terms with us on this condition".

Abu Talib called the Holy Prophet and said, "Dear nephew, these people of your tribe have come to me with a request. They want you to agree with them on a just matter so as to put an end to your dispute with them. " Then he told him about the request of the chiefs of the Quraish.

The Holy Prophet replied, "Dear uncle: I shall request them to agree upon a thing which, if they accept, will enable them to conquer the whole of Arabia and subject the non-Arab world to their domination. " Hearing this the people were first confounded; they did not know how they should turn down such a proposal. Then, after they had considered the matter, they replied: "You speak of one word: we are prepared to repeat ten others like it, but please tell us what it is. " The Holy Prophet said: La ilaha ill-Allah. At this they got up all together and left the place saying what Allah has narrated in the initial part of this Surah.

Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat has related this event just as cited above, but, according to him, this did not happen during Abu Talibs last illness but at the time when the Holy Prophet had started preaching Islam openly, and the news of the conversion of one person or the other was being heard almost daily in Makkah. In those days the Quraish chiefs had led several deputations to Abu Talib and had asked him to stop Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) from preaching his message, and it was with one of those deputations that this conversation had taken place.

Zamakhshari, Razi, Nisaburi and some other commentators say that this deputation went to Abu Talib at the time then the chiefs of the Quraish had been upset at Hadrat Umar's embracing Islam; but no reference to its basis is available in any book of the traditions, nor have these commentators cited the source of their this information. However, if it be true, it is understand able. For the unbelieving Quraish had already been bewildered to see that the person who had arisen from among themselves with the message of Islam had no parallel in the entire tribe as regarded nobility, purity of character, wisdom and seriousness. Moreover, his right-hand-man and chief supporter was a man like Abu Bakr, who was well known in and around Makkah as a gentle, righteous and brilliant man. Now when they might have seen that a brave and resolute man like Umar also had joined them, they must have felt that the danger was growing and becoming intolerable.

Subject Matter and Topics

The Surah begins with a review of the aforesaid meeting. Making the dialogue between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers the basis, Allah says that the actual reason with those people for their denial is not any defect in the message of Islam but their own arrogance, jealousy and insistence on following the blind. They are not prepared to believe in a man from their own clan as a Prophet of God and follow him. They want to persist in the ideas of ignorance which they have found their ancestors following. And when a person exposes their this ignorance and presents the truth before them, they are alarmed and regard it as an oddity, rather as a novel and impossible thing. For them the concept of Tauhid and the Hereafter is not only an unacceptable creed but also a concept which only deserves to be ridiculed and mocked.

Then, Allah, both in the initial part of the Surah and in its last sentences, has precisely warned the disbelievers, as if to say, "The man whom you are ridiculing today and whose guidance you reject will soon overpower you, and the time is not far when in this very city of Makkah, where you are persecuting him, he will overwhelm you completely. " Then describing nine of the Prophets, one after the other, with greater details of the story of the Prophets David and Solomon; Allah has emphasized the point that His Law of Justice is impartial and objective, that only the right attitude of man is acceptable to Him, that He calls to account and punishes every wrongdoer who. ever he be, and that He likes only those people who do not persist in wrongdoing but repent as soon as they are warned of it, and pass their life in the world keeping in mind their accountability in the Hereafter.

After this, the final end that the obedient servants and the disobedient people will meet in the Hereafter, has been depicted, and two things have been especially impressed on the disbelievers: (1) That the leaders and guides whom the ignorant people are following blindly in the world, on the way of deviation, will have reached Hell even before their followers in the Hereafter, and the two groups will be cursing each other there; and (2) that the disbelievers will be amazed to see that there is no trace whatever in Hell of the believers whom they used to regard as contemptible in the world and will themselves be involved in its torment.

In conclusion, mention has been made of the story of Adam and Iblis (Satan), which is meant to tell the disbelieving Quraish that the same arrogance and vanity which was preventing them from bowing before Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had prevented Iblis also from bowing before Adam. Iblis felt jealous of the high rank God had given to Adam and became accursed when he disobeyed His Command. Likewise, "You, O people of Quraish, are feeling jealous of the high rank God has bestowed on Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and are not prepared to obey him whom God has appointed His messenger. Therefore, you will be doomed ultimately to the same fate as will be met by Satan. "

39. Zumar:

Name

The Surah derives its name from verse 71 and 73 in which the word zumar has occurred.
Period of Revelation
In verse 10 (wa ardullah-i-wasi atun: and Allah's earth is vast) there is abundant evidence that this Surah was sent down before the migration to Habash. Some traditions provide the explanation that this verse was sent down in respect of Hadrat Ja'far bin Abi Talib and his companions when they made up their mind to emigrate to Habash. (Ruh al-Maani, vol. XXII, p. 226).
Theme and Subject matter
The entire Surah is a most eloquent and effective address which was given some time before the emigration to Habash, in an environment filled with tyranny and persecution, ill-will and antagonism, at Makkah. It is a sermon whose addressees mainly are the unbelieving Quraish, although here and there the believers also have been addressed. In it the real aim of the invitation of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been enunciated, which is this: Man should adopt Allah's servitude sincerely, and should not pollute his God worship with the service of any other. Presenting this cardinal principle in different ways over and over again, the truth of Tauhid and the excellent results of accepting it, and the falsehood of shirk and the evil consequences of following it, have been explained in a most forceful way, and the people exhorted to give up their wrong way of life and return to the mercy of their Lord. In this very connection, the believers have been instructed, as if to say: "If a place has become narrow for the worship and service of Allah, His earth is vast: you may emigrate to some other place in order to save your faith: Allah will reward you for your patience. "On the other hand, the Holy Prophet has been encouraged, so as to say: "Tell the disbelievers plainly that they may do whatever they like, but their persecutions and tyrannies will never deter you from the way of Islam; that they may go on doing their worst to obstruct your way, but you will continue to perform your mission in spite of the adverse conditions and circumstances. "

40. Al Mu'min:

Name
The Surah takes its name Al Mu'min from verse 28, implying thereby, that it is a Surah in which Al Mu'min (the Believer of Pharaoh's people) has been mentioned.
Period of Revelation
According to Ibn `Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, this Surah was sent down consecutively after Surah Az Zumar, and its present position in the order of the Surahs in the Quran is the same as its chronological order.
Background of Revelation
There are clear indications in the subject matter of this Surah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of the activities against the Holy Prophet. First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Quran and the

message of Islam and about the Holy Prophet himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations so that the Holy Prophet and the believers were sick of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Holy Prophet himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhari has related a tradition on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Amr bin 'As saying that one day when the Holy Prophet was offering his Prayer in the precinct's of the Kaabah, suddenly 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Hadrat Abu Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Hadrat Abdullah says that when Abu Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: "Would you kill a man only because he says: Allah is my Lord? " With a little variation this event has also been mentioned in Ibn Hisham, Nasa'i and Ibn Abi Hatim.

Theme and Topics

Both aspects of this have been clearly stated at the very outset, and then the whole following discourse is a most effective and instructive review of them.

As an answer to the conspiracies of murder, the story of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh has been acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), your power and authority will come to an end. That is why you are straining every nerve to frustrate and defeat him. " In the same connection, the disbelievers have been warned again and again to the effect: "If you do not desist from wrangling against the Revelations of Allah, you will be doomed to the same fate as the nations of the past. Much worse torment awaits you in the Hereafter. Then you will repent, but it will be too late.

41. Ha-Mim:

Name

The name of this Surah is composed of two words, Ha-Mim and As-Sajdah, which implies that it is a Surah which begins with Ha-Mim and in which a verse requiring the performance of sajdah (prostration) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Hamzah and before the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Umar. Muhammad bin Ishaq, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet, has related on the authority of Muhammad bin Ka`b al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the Companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Haram, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Holy Prophet sitting by himself.

This was the time when Hadrat Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, Utbah bin Rabi'ah (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan) said to the Quraish chiefs: "Gentlemen, if you like I would go and speak to Muhammad (upon whom be

Allah's peace and blessings) and put before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he stops opposing us.
They all agreed to this, and Utbah went and sat by the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet turned to him, he said: "Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble: you have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools: you talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them.
The Holy Prophet said: "Abul Walid, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you. " He said, "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to became an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense. " 'Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Holy Prophet went on listening to him quietly. Then he said, "Have you said, O Abul Walid, what you had to say? " He replied that he had.
The Holy Prophet said: "Well, now listen to me. "Then pronouncing Bismilah ir Rahman-ir-Raihm he began to recite this very Surah, and Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (v. 38) the Holy Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walid, now you may act as you please.
Then Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here. " Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard? " He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your band against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honor your honor.
Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Walid, have been bewitched by his tongue. "Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please. " (Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 313-314).
This story has been narrated by several other traditionists also on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Holy Prophet had come to verse 13, viz. "If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the Ad and the Thamud, "Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Holy Prophet's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, have mercy on your people. " Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: "You

know that whatever Muhammad says is always fulfilled; therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us. " (For details, see Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. IV, pp. 90-91; Al Bidayah wan-Nihayah, vol. III, p. 62).

Theme and Subject Matter

In the discourse that Allah sent down in response to what Utbah said, no attention whatever was paid to the absurd proposals that he had made to the Holy Prophet. For what he had said was, in fact, an attack on the Holy Prophet's intention and his intellect. His assumption was that as there was no possibility of his being a Prophet and the Quran being Allah's Revelation, inevitably the motive of his invitation must either be the desire to obtain wealth and political power, or, God forbid, he had lost his reason. In the first case, he wanted to make a bargain with the Holy Prophet; in the second, he was insulting him when he said that the Quraish chiefs would have been cured of his madness at their own expense. Obviously, when the opponents come down to such absurd things, no gentleman would like to answer them, but would ignore them and say what he himself had to say.

Therefore, ignoring what Utbah said, this Surah makes antagonism its subject of discussion, which the unbelieving Quraish were showing stubbornly and wickedly in order to defeat the message of the Qur'an. They would say to the Holy Prophet, "You may try however hard you try: we would not listen to you. We have put coverings on our hearts and we have closed our ears. There is a wall between you and us, which would never let us meet together. "

They had given a clear notice to the Holy Prophet to the effect: "You may continue your mission of inviting the people to yourself, but we would go on opposing you as hard as we can to frustrate your mission. "

For this object they had devised the following plan: Whenever the Holy Prophet or a follower of his would try to recite the Qur'an before the people, they would at once raise such a hue and cry that no one could bear anything. They were desperately trying to misconstrue the verses of the Qur'an and spread every kind of misunderstanding among the people. They misconstrued everything and found fault even with the straightforward things. They would isolate words and sentences from their right context, from here and there, and would add their own words in order to put new meanings on them so as to mislead the people about the Quran and the Messenger who presented it.

They would raise strange objections a specimen of which has been presented in this Surah. They said, "If an Arab presents a discourse in Arabic, what could be the miracle in it? Arabic is his mother tongue. Anyone could compose anything that he pleased in his mother tongue and then make the claim that he had received it from God. It would be a miracle if the person would suddenly arise and make an eloquent speech in a foreign tongue which he did not know. Then only could one say that the discourse was not of his own composition but a revelation from God. "

Here is a resume of what has been said in answer to this deaf and blind opposition:

(1) The Qur'an is most certainly the Word of God, which He has sent down in Arabic. The ignorant people do not find any light of knowledge in the truths that have been

presented in it plainly and clearly, but the people of understanding are seeing this light as well as benefiting by it. It is surely Allah's mercy that He has sent down this Word for the guidance of man. If a person regarded it as an affliction, it would be his own misfortune. Good news is for those who benefit by it and warning for those who turn away from it.

(2) If you have put coverings on your hearts and have made yourselves deaf, it is none of the Prophet's job to make the one hear who does not want to hear, and the one who does not want to understand forcibly. He is a man like you; he can make only those to hear and understand, who are inclined to hear and understand.

(3) Whether you close down your eyes and ears and put coverings on your hearts, the fact, however, is that your God is only One God, and you are not the servant of any one else. Your stubbornness cannot change this reality in any way. If you accept this truth and correct your behavior accordingly you will do good only to yourselves, and if you reject it, you will only be preparing your own doom.

(4) Do you have any understanding as to whom you disbelieve and with whom you associate others in divinity? It is with regard to that God Who has created this limitless universe, Who is the Creator of the earth and heavens, from Whose blessings you are benefiting on the earth, and on Whose provisions you are being fed and sustained. You set up His mean creatures as His associates and then you are made to understand the truth you turn away in stubbornness.

(5) If you still do not believe, then be aware that a sudden torment is about to visit you, the like of which had visited the Ad and the Thamud, and this torment also will not be the final punishment of your crimes, but there is in addition the accountability and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

(6) Wretched is the man who gets as company such satans from among men and jinn, who show him nothing but green and pleasant, who make his follies seem fair to him, who neither let him think aright himself nor let him hear right from others. But on the Day of Reckoning when their doom overtakes them, each one of them will say that if he happened to get hold of those who had misled and deceived him in the world, he would trample them under his foot.

(7) This Quran is an unchangeable Book. You can not defeat it by your machinations and falsehoods. Whether falsehood comes from the front or makes a secret and indirect attack from behind, it cannot succeed in refuting it.

(8) Today when this Quran is being Presented in your own language so that you may understand it, you say that it should have been sent down in some foreign tongue. But had We sent it in a foreign tongue for your guidance, you would yourselves have called it a joke, as if to say, "What a strange thing! The Arabs are being given guidance in a non-Arabic language, which nobody understands. " This means that you, in fact, have no desire to obtain guidance. You are only inventing ever new excuses for not affirming the faith.

(9) Have you ever considered that if it became established that the Qur'an was really from Allah, then what fate you would meet by denying it and opposing it so vehemently as you do?
(10) Today you do not believe but soon you will see with your own eyes that the message of this Qur'an had pervaded the whole world and you have yourselves been overwhelmed by it. Then you will come to know that what you were being told was the very truth.
Besides giving these answers to the opponents, attention has been paid to the problems which the believers and the Holy Prophet himself were facing in that environment of active resistance. Not to speak of preaching the message to others, the believers were even finding it difficult to follow the way of the Faith. Any one about whom it became known that he had become a Muslim, life would become an agony. As against the dreadful combination of the enemy and its all pervading power, they were feeling utterly helpless and powerless. In this state, in the first place, they were consoled and encouraged, as if to say: "You are not, in fact, helpless and powerless, for any person who believes in God as his Lord and adheres to this belief and way of life resolutely, God's angels descend on him and help and support him at every stage, from the life of this world till the Hereafter. " Then they were encouraged with the consolation: "The best man is be who does good, invites others to God and proclaims firmly that he is a Muslim. "
The question that was vexing the Holy Prophet at that time was as to how be should carve out a way of preaching his message when he had to face such heavy odds on every side. The solution he was given to this question was: "Although apparently the obstacles seem to be insurmountable, the weapon of good morals and character can smash and melt them away. Use this weapon patiently, and whenever Satan provokes you and incites you to use some other device, seek refuge in Allah. "

42. Shura:

Name
It is derived frog the sentence, wa amru-hum shura baina hum, of verse 38, implying thereby that it is a Surah in which the word shura has occurred.
Period of Revelation
Although it could not be known from any authentic traditions, yet one feels after a study of its subject matter that this Surah might have been sent down consecutively after Ha-Miim As Sajdah, for it seems to be, in a way, a supplement to it. This will become clear to every person who first studies Surah Ha-Mim As Sajdah carefully and then goes through this Surah. He will see that in that Surah the Quraish chiefs had been taken to tack for their deaf and blind opposition so that anyone in Makkah and in its out-skirts, who had any sense of morality and nobility left in him, should know how unreasonably the chiefs of the people were opposing Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as against them, how serious he was in everything he said, how rational was his standpoint and how noble his character and conduct. Immediately after that warning this

Surah was sent down, which did full justice to teaching and instruction, and made the truth of the Holy Prophet's message plain in such an impressive way that anyone who had any element of the love of the truth in him and who had not been blinded by the errors of ignorance, could not help being influenced by it.

Theme and Subject Matter

The discourse begins in a way as if to say: "Why are you expressing surprise and amazement at what Our Prophet is presenting before you? What he says is not new or strange, nor anything novel, which might have been presented for the first time in history: that Revelation should come down to a man from God and he should be given instructions for the guidance of mankind. Allah has been sending similar Revelations with similar instructions to the former Prophets before this. It is not surprising that the Owner of the Universe should be acknowledged as Deity and Ruler, but what is strange is that one should accept another as divine and deity in spite of being His subject and slave. You are being angry with him who is presenting Tauhid before you, where as the shirk that you are practicing with regard to the Master of the Universe is such a grave crime as may cause the heavens to break asunder. The angels are amazed at this boldness of yours and fear that the wrath of Allah might descend on you any moment. "

After this the people have been told that a person's being appointed to Prophethood and his presenting himself as a Prophet does not mean that he has been made master of the people's destinies and he has come to the world with that very claim. Allah has kept the destinies in His own hand. The Prophet has come only to arouse the heedless and guide the strayed ones to the Right Path. To call to account those who do not listen to him and to punish or not to punish them is Allah's own responsibility. and not part of the Prophet's work. Therefore, they should take it out of their head that the Prophet has come with a claim similar to those that are made by their so called religious guides and saints to the effect that he who would not listen to them, or would behave insolently towards them, would be burnt to death: In this very connection, the people have also been told that the Prophet has not come to condemn them but he is their well wisher; he is warning them that the way they are following will only lead to their own destruction.

Then, an answer has been given to the question: Why didn't Allah make all human beings righteous by birth, and why did He allow the difference of viewpoint owing to which the people start following each and every way of thought and action? The answer given is this: Owing to this very fact has it become possible for man to attain to the special mercy of Allah, which is not meant for other dumb creatures, but is only meant for those endowed with power and authority, who should take Allah as Patron and Guardian not instinctively but consciously by willing choice. Allah supports the man who adopts this way and guides and helps him to do good and right and admits him into His special mercy. On the contrary, the man who misuses his option and makes his patron those who are not, in fact, the guardians, and cannot be, are deprived of divine mercy. In this connection, it has also been made clear that only Allah is the Patron of man and of all other creatures. Others are neither the patron nor have the power to do full justice to patronage. Man's success depends only on this that he should make no

mistake in choosing a patron for himself by the use of his free choice, and should take only Him his Guide Who, in reality, is the real Patron.
After this, it has been explained what the Din being presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) really is :
Its primary basis that as Allah Almighty is the Creator, Master and real Patron of the Universe and Man, He alone is Man's Ruler, He alone has the right to give Man Faith (Din) and Law (system of belief and practice) and judge the disputes of man and tell what is Truth and what is falsehood. No other being has any right whatever to be man's lawgiver. In other words, like the natural sovereignty, the sovereignty with regard to lawmaking also is vested only in Allah. No man or creature, apart from Allah, can be the bearer of this sovereignty. And if a person does not recognize and accept this Divine rule of Allah, it is merely futile for him to recognize the natural sovereignty of Allah.
On this very basis has Allah ordained a Din (True Religion) for Man from the very beginning. It was one and the same Religion that was vouchsafed in every age to all the Prophets. No Prophet ever founded any separate religion of his own. The same one Religion has been enjoined by Allah for all Mankind since the beginning of creation, and all the Prophets have been following it and inviting others to follow it.
This Religion and Creed was not sent so that man may rest content only with believing in it, but it was sent with the purpose and intention that it alone should be introduced, established and enforced in the world, and no man made religion be made to prevail in Allah's earth apart from His Religion. The Prophets had not been appointed only to preach this Religion but to establish it particularly in the world.
This same was the original Religion of mankind, but after the death of the Prophets, selfish people created new creeds by creating schisms for vested interests due to self-conceit, vanity and ostentation. All the different religions and creeds found in the world today have resulted from corruption of the original Divine Truth.
Now, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace,) has been sent so that he may present before the people the same and original Religion in place of the various practices and artificial creeds and man made religions, and may try to establish the same. On this, if instead of being grateful, you feel angry and come out to fight him, it is your folly; the Prophet will not abandon his mission only because of your foolishness. He has been enjoined to adhere to his faith at all costs and to carry out the mission to which he has been appointed. Therefore, the people should not cherish any false hope that in order to please them he would cater to the same whims and superstitions of ignorance which has corrupted Allah's Religion before.
You do not understand how great an impudence it is against Allah to adopt a man made religion and law instead of the Religion and Law enjoined by Allah. You think it is an ordinary thing and there is nothing wrong with it. But in the sight of Allah it is the worst kind of shirk and a grave crime whose punishment will be imposed on all those who enforced their own religion on Allah's earth and those who adopted and followed their religion.

Thus, after presenting a clear and visible concept of Religion it is said: "The best possible method that could be employed for your instruction and for bringing you to the Right Path has already been employed. On the one hand, Allah has sent down His Book, which is teaching you the truth in a most impressive way in your own language; and on the other, the lives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are present before you by which you can see for yourselves what kind of men are prepared by the guidance given in this Book. Even then if you do not accept this guidance, nothing else in the world can bring you to the Right Path. The only alternative, therefore, is that you should be allowed to persist in the same error in which you have remained involved for centuries, and made to meet with the same doom which has been destined by Allah for such wrongdoers. "

While stating these truths, brief arguments have been given, here and there, for Tauhid and the Hereafter, the world worshippers have been warned of the evil consequences and their punishment in the life hereafter, and the disbelievers have been criticized for the moral weaknesses, which were the real cause of their deviation from the truth. The Surah has been concluded with two important themes.

First, that the Holy Prophet was wholly unaware of this concept of the "Book" or the True Faith during the first forty years of his life and then his sudden appearance before the people with those two things, is a manifest proof of his being a Prophet.

Secondly, his presenting his own teaching as the teaching of God does not mean that he claims to have spoken to God, face to face, but God has conveyed to him this Guidance, as in the case of all other Prophets, in three ways: He speaks to His Prophets either through Revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends an angel with the message. This thing was clarified so that the opponents did not have an opportunity of accusing the Holy Prophet of claiming to have spoken to God, face to face, and the lovers of the truth should know by what methods Allah gave instruction to the man whom He had appointed to the mission of Prophet-hood.

43. Zukhruuf:

Name

It is derived from the word zukhruf-an which occurs in verse 33 of this Surah.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition, but a study of its subject matter shows that this Surah also was sent down in the same period in which the Surahs Al Mumin, As Sajdah and Ash Shura, were sent down. It appears that the revelation of this series of the Surahs began when the disbelievers of Makkah were planning to put an end to the Holy Prophet's life. Day and night they were holding consultations in their assemblies as how to eliminate him, and even an attack on his life also had been made as has been clearly referred to in vv. 79-80.

Theme and Topics

In this Surah a forceful and severe criticism has been made of the Quraish and the common Arabs creeds and superstitions of ignorance in which they persisted, and their

stubbornness has been exposed in a firm and effective way, so that every member of the society, who was reasonable in some degree, should be made to consider the evils in which the community was involved and its tyrannical treatment of the person who was trying to redeem it.
The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "You, by means of your mischiefs, want that the revelation of this Book should be stopped, but Allah has never withheld the appointment of His Prophets and the revelation of His Books because of the mischief of the people, but has destroyed the wicked people, who obstructed the way of His guidance. The same He will do again. A little further in vv. 41-43 and 79-80 the same thing has been reiterated. Though the people who were plotting against his life are meant, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "whether you remain alive or not, We will certainly punish the wicked, " and the people themselves have been plainly warned to the effect: "If you have decided to take an action against Our Prophet, We too will take a decisive action. "
Then, it has been told what is the reality of the religion that the people are following so devotedly and what are the arguments on whose strength they are resisting Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and Blessings).
They themselves admit that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of themselves and their deities is only Allah. They also know and admit that the blessings they are benefiting from, have been bestowed by Allah; yet they insist on making others associates of Allah in His Godhead. They regard the servants as the children of Allah, and that too daughters, whom they regard as disgraceful for themselves.
They believe that the angels are goddesses; they have carved their images as females; they adorn them with female dresses and ornaments, and call them daughters of Allah: they worship them and invoke them for the fulfillment of their needs. How did they know that the angels were female?
When they are rebuked for these superstitions, they present the pretense of destiny and say : "Had Allah disapproved of these our practices, we could not have worshipped these images, whereas the means of finding out whether Allah had approved of something or not, are His Books and not those things which are happening in the world according to His Will. For under His Will not only idol worship but crimes like theft and adultery, robbery. murder, etc. also are being committed. Can this argument be used to justify as right and proper this commission of every crime and evil is the world?
When it is asked: Have you any other authority, apart from this wrong argument, for the polytheism of yours? They reply, "The same has been the practice since the time of our forefathers. " In other words, this in their opinion is a strong enough argument for a creed's being right and true, whereas the Prophet Ibraham, descent from whom is the only basis of their pride and distinction, had rejected the religion of his elders and left his home, and he had discarded every such blind imitation of his forefathers, which did not have the support of any rational argument. Then, if these people had to follow their elders only, for this also they selected their most ignorant elders and abandoned their most illustrious elders like the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (on whom be peace).

When they are asked: "Has ever a Prophet or a Book sent down by God also given this teaching that others beside Allah too are worthy of worship? they present this practice of the Christians as an argument that they took Jesus son of Mary as son of God and worshipped him; whereas the question was not this whether the community of a Prophet had committed shirk or not, but this whether a Prophet had himself taught shirk. Jesus son of Mary had never said that he was son of God and that the people should worship him. His own was the same teaching which every other Prophet had given "My Lord as well as your Lord is Allah: so worship Him alone. "

They were disinclined to believe in the Prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet because he was neither a rich man nor a person of high worldly position and rank. They said "Had Allah willed to appoint a prophet among us, He would have appointed one of the great men of' our two cities (Makkah and Taif). On that very basis, Pharaoh also had looked down upon the Prophet Moses and said: "If Allah, the King of the heavens, had to send a messenger to me, the king of the earth, He would have sent him with bracelets of gold and a company of angels in attendance. Where-from has this mendicant appeared I am superior to him, for the kingdom of Egypt belongs to me, and the canals of the River Nile are flowing under my control. What is the status of this man as against me? He has neither wealth nor authority. "

Thus, after criticizing each practice of ignorance of the disbelievers and rejecting it with rational arguments, it has been pointed out: "Neither has God any offspring, nor are there separate gods of the earth and heavens, nor is there any intercessor who may be able to protect from His punishment those who adopt deviation knowingly. Allah is far above this that He should have children. He alone is the God of the whole Universe: all others are His servants and not associates in His attributes and powers, and only such men can intercede with Him, who are themselves followers of the Truth and they also can intercede only for those who may have adopted obedience of the Truth in the world. "

44. Dukhaan:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word dukhaan which occurs in verse 10.

Period of Revelation

Its period of revelation also could not be determined from any authentic tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject matter shows that this Surah too was sent down in the same period in which Surah Zukhruf and a few other earlier Surahs had been revealed. However, this Surah was sent down somewhat later. Its historical background is this: When the disbelievers of Makkah became more and more antagonistic in their attitude and conduct, the Holy Prophet prayed: O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph. He thought that when the people would be afflicted with a calamity, they would remember God, their hearts would soften and they would accept the admonition. Allah granted his prayer, and the whole land was overtaken by such a terrible famine that the people were sorely distressed. At last, some of the Quraish

chiefs among whom Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud has particularly mentioned the name of Abu Sufyan came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to pray to Allah to deliver his people from the calamity. On this occasion Allah sent down this Surah.

Subject Matter and Topics

The introduction to the address revealed on this occasion for the admonition and warning of the people of MaKkah contained some important points, which are as follows

(1) "You, O People of Makkah, are wrong in thinking that the Quran is being composed by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This Book by itself bears the clear testimony that it is not the composition of a man but of Allah, Lord of the worlds. "

(2) "You are making a wrong estimate of the worth of this Book. You think it is a calamity that has descended on you, whereas the Hour when Allah, out of sheer mercy, decided to send His Messenger and His Book to you was highly blessed. "

(3) "You are foolishly involved in the misunderstanding that you will fight this Messenger and this Book and will win, whereas the fact is that the Messenger has been raised and the Book sent down in that particular Hour when Allah decides the destinies, and Allah's decisions are not so weak that they may be changed to a person's liking, nor are they based on ignorance and folly that there may be the likelihood of a mistake or error or weakness in them. They are rather the firm and unalterable decisions of the Ruler of the Universe, Who is All Hearing, All Knowing and All Wise. Therefore, they cannot be treated lightly.

(4) "You yourselves acknowledge that Allah alone is the Master and Lord of the earth and heavens and of everything in the Universe and also admit that life and death are only in His power, yet you insist on making others your deities, for which the only argument you offer is that that had been the practice since the time of your forefathers, whereas if a person has the conviction that Allah alone is the Master, Sustainer and Giver of life and death, he can never entertain the doubt that there can be other gods also beside Him, who can be worthy of worship. If your forefathers had committed this folly, there is no reason why you also should continue committing it blindly. As a matter of fact, their Lord too was only One God, Who is your Lord, and they also should have worshipped only Him, Whom you should worship. "

(5) "The only demand of Allah's Providence and Mercifulness is not this that He should feed you, but also this that He should arrange guidance for you. For this very guidance He has sent His Messenger and His Book. "

After this introduction, the question of the famine that was raging in Makkah has been discussed. As already mentioned, this famine had occurred on the Holy Prophet's prayer, and he had prayed for it so that when the calamity befell it would break the stubbornness of the disbelievers and then they would listen to the rebuke. It looked as if this expectation was being fulfilled to some extent, for some of the most stubborn enemies of the Truth, on account of the severities of the famine, had cried out: "O Lord, avert this torment from us and we will believe. " At this, on the one hand, the Holy Prophet has been foretold : "These people will not learn any lesson from such

calamities. When they have turned away from the Messenger, whose life, character, works and speech clearly show that he is Allah's true Messenger, how will a mere famine help remove their disbelief? " On the other, the unbelievers have been addressed, so as to say : "You lie when you say that you will believe as soon as the torment is removed from you. We shall just remove it to see how sincere you are in your promise. There is a graver disaster about to fall upon you. You need a much more crushing blow : minor misfortunes cannot set you right. "

In this very connection, a reference has been made a little below to Pharaoh and his people, implying that those people also had met with precisely the same trial as the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish are now afflicted. To them also a similar noble and honorable Messenger had come; they also had seen those express pointers and signs which clearly showed that he had been appointed by Allah; they also had gone on witnessing one sign after the other but they did not give up their stubbornness, till at last they made up their mind to put an end to the Messenger's life, and they met their doom, which has since become an object lesson for the people for ever.

After this the theme of the Hereafter has been taken up, which the disbelievers of Makkah vehemently denied. They said: "We have never seen anyone rising back to life after death. Raise our forefathers back to life if you are true in your claim about the life hereafter. " In response to this, two arguments for the Hereafter have been presented briefly (1) That the denial of this creed has always proved destructive for the morals; and (2) that the universe is not a plaything of a thoughtless diety, but it is a wise system and no work of wisdom is ever vain or useless. Then the disbelievers demand to bring their forefathers back to life has been answered, thus : "This cannot be done every day to meet the demand of the individuals, but Allah has appointed a time when He will resurrect all mankind simultaneously and will subject them to accountability in His Court. If one has to protect oneself there, one should think about it here. For no one will be able to save himself there by his own power, nor by the power of any one else. "

In connection with this Court of Allah, mention has been made of the fate of those who will be declared as culprits and of the rewards of those who will be declared as successful. The discourse has been concluded with this warning: "This Quran has been revealed in simple language in your own tongue so that you may understand it; yet if you do not understand it and insist on seeing your evil end, you may wait; Our Prophet too is waiting. Whatever is to happen, will happen at its own appointed time. "

45. Jaathiya:

Name

It is derived from the sentence wa taraa kulla ummat-in jathiyat-un of verse 28, implying thereby that it is the Surah in which the word jathiyah has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Surah also has not been mentioned in any authentic tradition, but its subject matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after

Surah Ad Dukhaan. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Surahs makes them look like the twin Surahs.

Subject Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about Tauhid and the Hereafter and warns them for their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Qur'an.

The discourse begins with the arguments for Tauhid. In this connection, reference has been made to the countless Signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens, and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to tauhid which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these Signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Qur'an they have been warned that this Qur'an has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the world. Then, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to them. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear highway of Religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succor and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behavior towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers hold about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life there was no life hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not

survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Holy Prophet, saying: "If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life. " In answer to this, Allah has given the following arguments
(1) "You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated? "
(2) "Your this claim rests mainly on this that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?
(3) It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result; neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the Truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.
(4) That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. Then, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them.
After giving these arguments Allah says most emphatically: "Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you. "

46. Ahqaaf:

Name
It is derived from the sentence idh andhara qauma-hu bil Ahqaaf-i of verse 21.
Period of Revelation
It is determined by an historical event that has been mentioned in vv. 29-32. This incident of the visit of the jinn and their going back after listening to the Qur'an had occurred, according to agreed traditions of the Hadith and biographical literature, at the time when the Holy Prophet had halted at Makkah during his return journey from Ta'if

to Makkah. And according to all authentic historical traditions he had gone to Ta'if three years before the Hijrah; therefore it is determined that this Surah was sent down towards the end of the 10th year or in the early part of the 11th year of the Prophet-hood.

Historical Background

The 10th year of the Prophet-hood was a year of extreme persecution and distress in the Holy prophet's life. The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Hashim and the Muslims for three years and the Holy Prophet and the people of his family aad Companions lay besieged in Shi'b Abi Talib. The Quraish had blocked up this locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. Only during the Hajj season they were allowed to come out and buy some articles of necessity. But even at that time whenever Abu Lahab noticed any of them approaching the market place or a trading caravan he would call out to the merchants exhorting them to announce forbidding rates of their articles for them, and would pledge that he himself would buy those articles so that they did not suffer any loss. This boycott which continued uninterrupted for three years had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hashim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees.

At last, when the siege was lifted this year, Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet's uncle, who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, Hadrat Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Holy Prophet used to refer to this year as the year of sorrow and grief.

After the death of Hadrat Khadijah and Abu Talib the disbelievers of Makkah became even bolder against the Holy Prophet. They started treating him even more harshly. So much so that it became difficult for him to step out of his house. Of these days Ibn Hisham has related the incident that a Quraish scoundrel one day threw dust at him openly in the street.

At last, the Holy Prophet left for Ta'if with the intention that he should invite the Bani Thaqif to Islam, for even if they did not accept Islam, they might at least be persuaded to allow him to work for his mission peacefully. He did not have the facility of any conveyance at that time, and traveled all the way to Ta'if on foot. According to some traditions, he had gone there alone, but according to others, he was accompanied by Zaid bin Harithah. He stayed at Ta'if for a few days, and approached each of the chiefs and nobles of the Bani Thaqif and talked to him about his mission. But not only they refused to listen to him, but plainly gave him the notice that he should leave their city, for they feared that his preaching might "spoil" their younger generation. Thus, he was compelled to leave Ta'if. When he was leaving the city, the chiefs of Thaqif set their slaves and scoundrels behind him, who went on crying at him, abusing him and petting him with stones for a long way from either side of the road till he became broken down

with wounds and his shoes were filled with blood. Wearied and exhausted he took shelter in the shade of the wall of a garden outside Ta'if, and prayed:

"O God, to Thee I complain of my weakness, little resource, and lowliness before men. O Most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou confide me? To one afar who will misjudge(??) me? Or to an enemy to whom Thou hast given power over me? If Thou art not angry with me I care not. Thy favor is more wide for me. I take refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which the darkness is illumined, and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thy anger descend upon me or Thy wrath light upon me. It is for Thee to be satisfied until Thou art well pleased. There is no power and no might save in Thee. " (Ibn Hisham: A. Guillaume's Translation, p. 193).

Grieved and heart broken when he returned and reached near Qarn al-Manazil, he felt as though the sky was overcast by clouds. He looked up and saw Gabriel in front of him, who called out: "Allah has heard the way your people have responded. He has, therefore, sent this angel in charge of the mountains. You may command him as you please. " Then the angel of the mountains greeted him and submitted : "If you like I would overturn the mountains from either side upon these people. " The Holy Prophet replied : "No, but I expect that Allah will create from their seed those who will worship none but Allah, the One. " (Bukhari, Dhikr al Mala'ikah; Muslim: Kitab al-Maghazi; Nasa'i : Al-Bauth).

After this he went to stay for a few days at Makkah, perplexed as to how he would face the people of Makkah, who, he thought, would be still further emboldened against him after hearing what had happened at Ta'if. It was here that one night when he was reciting the Qur'an in the Prayer, a group of the jinn happened to pass by and listened to the Qur'an, believed in it, and returned to their people to preach Islam. Thus, Allah gave His Prophet the good news that if the men were running away from his invitation, there were many of the jinn, who had become its believers, and they were spreading his message among their own kind.

Subject Matter and Topics

Such were the conditions when this Surah was sent down. Anyone who keeps this background in view, on the one hand, and studies this Surah, on the other, will have no doubt left in his mind that this is not at all the composition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), but "a Revelation from the All Mighty, All Wise Allah. " For nowhere in this Surah, from the beginning to the end, does one find even a tinge of the human feelings and reactions, which are naturally produced in a man who is passing through such hard conditions. Had it been the word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) whom the occurrence of personal griefs one after the other and the countless and the recent bitter experience at Ta'if had caused extreme anguish and distress, it would have reflected in some degree the state of the mind of the man who was the subject of these afflictions and griefs. Consider the prayer that we have cited above: it contains his own language its every word is saturated with the feelings that he had at the time. But this Surah which was sent down precisely in the same period and

was recited even by him under the same conditions, is absolutely free from every sign or trace of the time.
The subject matter of the Surah is to warn the disbelievers of the errors in which they were involved, and also persisted arrogantly, and were condemning the man who was trying to redeem them. They regarded the world as a useless and purposeless place where they were not answerable to anyone. They thought that invitation to Tauhid was false and stuck to the belief that their own deities were actually the associates of Allah. They were not inclined to believe that the Qur'an was the Word of the Lord of the worlds. They had a strange erroneous concept of apostleship on the basis of which they were proposing strange criteria of judging the Holy Prophet's claim to it. In their estimation one great proof of Islam's not being based on the truth was that their elders and important chiefs of the tribes and so called leaders of their nation were not accepting it and only a few young men, and some poor folks and some slaves had affirmed faith in it. They thought that Resurrection and life after death and the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter were fabrications whose occurrence was absolutely out of the question.
In this Surah each of these misconceptions has been refuted in a brief but rational way, and the disbelievers have been warned that if they would reject the invitation of the Qur'an and the Prophet-hood of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by prejudice and stubbornness instead of trying to understand its truth rationally, they would only be preparing for their own doom.

47. Muhammad:

Name
The Surah derives its name from the sentence wa amanu bi-ma nuzzila ala Muhammad-in of verse 2, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the holy name of Muhammad (upon wham be Allah's peace and blessings) has occurred. Besides, it has another well known name "al-Qital" also, which is derived from the sentence wa dhukira fi-hal-qital of verse 20.
Period of Revelation
The contents of this Surah testify that it was sent down after the hijrah at Madinah at the time when the fighting had been enjoined, though active fighting had not yet been undertaken. Detailed arguments in support of this view have been given in E. N. 8 below.
Historical Background
The conditions at the time when this Surah was sent down were such that the Muslims were being made the target of persecution and tyranny in Makkah in particular and in Arabia in general, and life had become miserable for them. Although the Muslims had emigrated to the haven of Madinah from every side, the disbelieving Quraish were not prepared to leave them alone and let them live in peace even there. Thus, the small settlement of Madinah was hemmed in by the enemy, who was bent upon exterminating it completely. The only alternative left with the Muslims were that either they should

surrender to the forces of ignorance, giving up their mission of preaching the true Faith, or even following it in their private lives, or should rise to wage a war at the cost of their lives to settle finally and for ever whether Islam would stay in Arabia or the creed of ignorance. On this occasion Allah showed the Muslims the same way of resolution and will, which is the only way for the true believers. He first permitted them to fight in Surah Al Hajj 39 and then enjoined fighting in Al Baqarah 190. But at that time everyone knew fully well what it meant to wage a war in those conditions. There were only a handful of Muslims in Madinah, who could not muster even a thousand soldiers; yet they were being urged to take up the sword and clash against the pagan forces of the whole of Arabia. Then the kind of the weapons needed to equip its soldiers for war could hardly be afforded by the town in which hundreds of emigrants were still homeless and unsettled even by resort to starving its members at a time when it had been boycotted economically by the Arabs on all sides.

Theme and Subject Matter

Such were the conditions when this Surah was revealed. Its theme is to prepare the believers for war and to give them preliminary instructions in this regard. That is why it has also been entitled al-Qital. It deals with the following topics:

At the outset it is said that of the two groups confronting each other at this time, one has refused to accept the Truth and has become an obstruction for others on the way of Allah, while the other group has accepted the Truth which had been sent down by Allah to His servant, Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, Allah's final decision is that He has rendered fruitless and vain all the works of the former group and set right the condition and affairs of the latter group.

After this, the Muslims have been given the initial war instructions they have been reassured of Allah's help and guidance: they have been given hope for the best rewards on offering sacrifices in the cause of Allah and they have been assured that their struggle in the cause of the Truth will not go to waste, but they will be abundantly rewarded both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Furthermore, about the disbelievers it has been said that they are deprived of Allah's support and guidance: none of their designs will succeed in their conflict with the believers, and they will meet a most evil fate both in this world and in the Hereafter. They thought they had achieved a great success by driving the Prophet of Allah out of Makkah, but in fact by this they had hastened their own doom.

After this, the discourse turns to the hypocrites, who were posing to be sincere Muslims before the command to fight was sent down, but were confounded when this command actually came down, and began to conspire with the disbelievers in order to save themselves from the hazards of war. They have been plainly warned to the effect that no act and deed is acceptable to Allah of those who adopt hypocrisy with regard to Him and His Prophet. There, the basic issue against which all those who profess the Faith are being tried is whether one is on the side of the Truth or Falsehood, whether one's sympathies are with Islam and the Muslims or with disbelief and the disbelievers, whether one keeps one's own self and interests dearer or the Truth which one professes

to believe in and follow. One who fails in this test is not at all a believer; his Prayer and his Fasting and his discharging of the zakat deserve no reward from Allah.
Then the Muslims have been exhorted not to lose heart for being small in numbers and ill equipped as against the great strength of the disbelievers: they should not show weakness by offering peace to them, which might still further embolden them against Islam and the Muslims, but they should come out with trust in Allah and clash with the mighty forces of disbelief. Allah is with the Muslims: they alone shall triumph; and the might of disbelief will be humbled and vanquished.
In conclusion, the Muslims have been invited to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah. Although at that time they were economically very weak, the problem that they confronted was the very survival of Islam and the Muslims. The importance and delicacy of the problem demanded that the Muslims should not only risk their lives for safeguarding themselves and their Faith from the dominance of disbelief and for exalting Allah's Religion but should also expend their economic resources as far as possible in the preparations for war. Therefore, they were clearly warned to the effect: Anyone who adopted a nigardly attitude at the time, would not, in fact, harm Allah at all, but would result in his own destruction, for Allah does not stand in need of help from men. If one group of men shirked offering sacrifices in the cause of His Religion, Allah would remove it and bring another group in its place.

48. Fat-h:

Name
It is derived from the words Inna fatah-na laka fat-han mubina of the very first verse. This is not only a name of the Surah but also its title in view of the subject matter, for it deals with the great victory that Allah granted to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in the form of the Truce of Hudaibiyah.
Period of Revelation
Traditions concur that it was sent down in Dhil-Qadah, A. H. 6, at a time when the Holy Prophet was on his return journey to Madinah after concluding the Truce of Hudaibiyah with the disbelievers of Makkah.
Historical Background
The events in connection with which this Surah was sent down began life this: One day the Holy Prophet saw in a dream that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions and had performed the umrah there. Obviously, the Prophet's dream could not be a mere dream and fiction for it is a kind of Divine inspiration as Allah Himself has confirmed in verse 27 below and said that He Himself had shown that dream to His Messenger. Therefore, it was not merely a dream but a Divine inspiration which the Holy Prophet had to obey and follow.
Apparently, there was no possible way of acting on this inspiration. The disbelieving Quraish had debarred the Muslims from proceeding to the Ka'bah for the past six years and no Muslim had been allowed during that period to approach the Ka`bah for the purpose of performing hajj and umrah. Therefore, it could not be expected that they

would allow the Holy Prophet to enter Makkah along with a party of his Companions. If they had proceeded to Makkah in the pilgrim garments with the intention of performing umrah, along with their arms, this would have provoked the enemy to war, and if they had proceeded unarmed, this would have meant endangering his own as well as his Companions' lives. Under conditions such as these nobody could see and suggest how the Divine inspiration could be acted upon.

But the Prophet's position was different. It demanded that he should carry out whatever Command his Lord gave fearlessly and without any apprehension and doubt. Therefore, the Holy Prophet informed his Companions of his dream and began to make preparations for the journey. Among the tribes living in the suburbs also he had the public announcement made that he was proceeding for umrah and the people could join him. Those who could only see the apparent conditions thought that he and his Companions were going into the very jaws of death none of them therefore was inclined to accompany him in the expedition. But those who had true faith in Allah and His Messenger were least bothered about the consequences. For them this information was enough that it was a Divine inspiration and Allah's Prophet had made up his mind to carry it into effect. After this nothing could hinder them from accompanying the Messenger of Allah. Thus, 1, 400 of the Companions became ready to follow him on this highly dangerous journey.

This blessed caravan set off from Madinah in the beginning of Dhil Qa'dah, A. H. 6. At Dhul Hulaifah they entered the pilgrims robe with the intention of umrah, took 70 camels with collars round their necks indicating that they were sacrificial animals; kept only a sword each in sheaths, which the pilgrims to the Ka`bah were allowed to carry according to the recognized custom of Arabia, but no other weapon. Thus, the caravan set out for the Ka'bah, the House of Allah, at Makkah, chanting the prescribed slogan of Labbaik, Allahuma labbaik.

The nature of the relations between Makkah and Madinah in those days was known too well to every Arab. Just the previous year, in Shawwal A. H. 5, the Quraish mustering the united strength of the Arab tribes had invaded Madinah and the well known Battle of the Trench had taken place. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet along with such a large caravan set off for the home of his blood-thirsty enemy, the whole of Arabia looked up with amazement, and the people also noticed that the caravan was not going with the intention to fight but was proceeding to the House of Allah in a forbidden month in the pilgrims garb carrying sacrificial animals and was absolutely unarmed.

The Quraish were confounded at this bold step taken by the Holy Prophet. Dhil-Qa'dah was one of those forbidden months which had been held as sacred for pilgrimage in Arabia for centuries. Nobody had a right to interfere with a caravan which might be coming for hajj or umrah in the pilgrims garb in this month; so much so that even an enemy tribe could not hinder it from passing through its territory according to the recognized law of the land. The Quraish therefore were caught in a dilemma, for if they attacked this caravan from Madinah and stopped it from entering Makkah, this would arouse a clamor of protest in the whole country, and all the Arab tribes would have the

misgiving that the Quraish had monopolized the Ka'bah as exclusively their own, and every tribe would be involved in the mistrust that now it depended on the will of the Quraish to allow or not to allow anyone to perform hajj or umrah in the future and that they would stop any tribe with which they were angry from visiting the Ka'bah just as they had stopped the Madinese pilgrims. This they thought would be a grave mistake, which would cause the entire Arabia to revolt against them. But, on the other hand, if they allowed Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his large caravan to enter their city safely, they would lose their image of power in Arabia and the people would say that they were afraid of Muhammad. At last, after a great deal of confusion, perplexity and hesitation they were overcome by their false sense of honor and for the sake of their prestige they took the decision that they would at no cost allow the caravan to enter the city of Makkah.
The Holy Prophet had dispatched a man of the Bani Ka`b as a secret agent so that he may keep him fully informed of the intentions and movements of the Quraish. When the Holy Prophet reached Usfan, he brought the news that the Quraish had reached Dhi Tuwa with full preparations and they had sent Khalid bin Walid with two hundred cavalry men in advance towards Kura'al-Ghamim to intercept him. The Quraish wanted somehow to provoke the Holy Prophet's Companions into fighting so that they may tell the Arabs that those people had actually come to fight and had put on the pilgrims garments for umrah only to deceive others.
Immediately on receipt of this information the Holy Prophet changed his route and following a very rugged, rocky track reached Hudaibiyah, which was situated right on the boundary of the sacred Makkan territory. Here, he was visited by Budail bin Warqa the chief of the Bani Khuza'ah, along with some men of his tribe. They asked what he had come for. The Holy Prophet replied that he and his Companions bad come only for pilgrimage to the House of Allah and for going round it in worship and not for war. The men of Khuza'ah went and told this to the Quraish chiefs and counseled them not to interfere with the pilgrims. But the Quraish were obstinate. They sent Hulays bin Alqamah, the chief of the Ahabish, to the Holy Prophet to persuade him to go back. Their object was that when Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) would not listen to Hulays, he would come back disappointed and then the entire power of the Ahabish would be on their side. But when Hulays went and saw that the whole caravan had put on the pilgrims garments, had brought sacrificial camels with festive collars round their necks, and had come for doing reverence to the House of Allah and not to fight, he returned to Makkah without having any dialogue with the Holy Prophet and told the Quraish chiefs plainly that those people bad no other object but to pay a visit to the Ka'bah; if they debarred them from it, the Ahabish would not join them in that, because they had not become their allies to support them even if they violated the sacred customs and traditions.
Then the Quraish sent Urwah bin Mas'ud Thaqafi; he had lengthy negotiations with the Holy Prophet in an effort to persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet gave him also the same reply that he had given to the chief of the

Khuza'ah, that they had not come to fight but to do honor to the House of Allah and carry out a religious duty. Urwah went back and said to the Quraish: "I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to him. If Muhammad makes his ablutions they would not let the water thereof fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. Now you may decide as to what you should do. "

In the meantime when the messages were coming and the negotiations were going on, the Quraish tried again and again to quietly launch sudden attacks on the Muslim camp in order to provoke the Companions and somehow incite them to war, but every time they did so the Companions' forbearance and patience and the Holy Prophet's wisdom and sagacity frustrated their designs. On one occasion forty or fifty of their men came at night and attacked the Muslim camp with stones and arrows. The Companions arrested all of them and took them before the Holy Prophet, but he let them go. On another occasion 80 men came from the direction of Tan'im right at the time of the Fajr Prayer and made a sudden attack. They were also caught, but the Holy Prophet forgave them, too. Thus, the Quraish went on meeting failure after failure in every one of their designs.

At last, the Holy Prophet sent Hadrat Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) as his own messenger to Makkah with the message that they had not come to fight but only for pilgrimage and had brought their sacrificial camels along, and they would go back after performing the rite of pilgrimage and offering the sacrifice. But the Quraish did not agree and withheld Hadrat Uthman in the city. In the meantime a rumor spread that Hadrat Uthman had been killed; and when he did not return in time the Muslims took the rumor to be true. Now they could show no more forbearance. Entry into Makkah was different for there was no intention to use force. But when the ambassador was put to death, the Muslims had no alternative but to prepare for war. Therefore, the Holy Prophet summoned all his Companions together and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight to death. In view of the critical occasion it was not an ordinary undertaking. The Muslims numbered only 1400 and had come without any weapons, were encamping at the boundary of Makkah, 250 miles away from their own city, and the enemy could attack them in full strength, and could surround them with its allies from the adjoining tribes as well. In spite of this, none from the caravan except one man failed to give his pledge to fight to death, and there could be no greater proof of their dedication and sincerity than that in the cause of Allah. This pledge is well known in the history of Islam as the pledge of Ridwan.

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Historical Background. . . . . .

Later it was known that the news about Hadrat Uthman was false. Not only did he return but under Suhail bin 'Amr from the Quraiah also arrived a deputation to negotiate peace with the Holy Prophet. Now, the Quraish no more insisted that they would disallow the Holy Prophet and his Companions to enter Makkah. However, in order to

save their face they only insisted that he went back that year but could come the following year to perform the umrah. After lengthy negotiations peace was concluded on the following terms:
(1) War would remain suspended for ten years, and no party would indulge in any hostility, open or secret, against the other.
(2) If any one during that period from among the Quraish went over to Muhammad, without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them, but if a Companion of Muhammad came oven to the Quraish, they would not return him to him.
(3) Every Arab tribe would have the option to join either side as its ally and enter the treaty.
(4) Muhammad and his men would go back that year and could come the following year for umrah and stay in Makkah for three days, provided that they brought only one sheathed sword each, and no other weapon of war. In those three days the Makkans would vacate the city for them (so that there was no chance of a clash), but they would not be allowed to take along any Makkan on return. When the conditions of the treaty were being settled, the whole of the Muslim army was feeling greatly upset. No one understood the expedience because of which the Holy Prophet was accepting the conditions. No one was far sighted enough to foresee the great benefit that was to result from this treaty. The disbelieving Quraish looked at it as their victory, and the Muslims were upset as to why they should be humiliated to accepting those mean conditions. Even a statesman of the caliber of Hadrat Umar says that he had never given way to doubt since the time he had embraced Islam but on this occasion he also could not avoid it. Impatient he went to Hadrat Abu Bakr and said "Is he (the Holy Prophet not Allah's Messenger, and are we not Muslims, and are they not polytheists? Then, why should we agree to what is humiliating to our Faith? " He replied "O Umar, he is surely Allah's Messenger, and Allah will never make him the loser. " Unsatisfied he went to the Holy Prophet himself and put the same questions to him, and he also gave him the same replies as Hadrat Abu Bakr had given. Afterwards Hadrat Umar continued to offer voluntary prayers and give aims so that Allah may pardon his insolence that he had shown towards the Holy Prophet on that occasion.
Two things in the treaty were highly disturbing for the Muslims first, the second condition, about which they said that it was an expressly unfair condition, for if they had to return a fugitive from Makkah, why should not the Quraish return a fugitive from Madinah? To this the Holy Prophet replied: "What use would be he to us, who fled from us to them? May Allah keep him away from us! And if we return the one who flees to us from them, Allah will create some other way out for him. " The other thing that was rankling in their minds was the fourth condition. The Muslims thought that agreeing to it meant that they were going back unsuccessful and this was humiliating. Furthermore, the question that was causing them feel upset wad that they had accepted the condition of going back without performing the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, whereas the Holy Prophet had seen in the vision that they were performing tawaf at Makkah. To this the Holy Prophet replied that in his vision the year had not been specified. According to the

treaty conditions, therefore, they would perform the tawaf the following year if it pleased Allah.
Right at the time when the document was being written, Suhail bin 'Amr's own son, Abu Jandal, who had become a Muslim and been imprisoned by the pagans of Makkah somehow escaped to the Holy Prophet's camp. He had fetters on his feet and signs of violence on his body. He implored the Holy Prophet that he help secure his release from imprisonment. The scene only increased the Companions' dejection, and they were moved beyond control. But Suhail bin 'Amr said the conditions of the agreement had been concluded between them although the writing was not yet complete; therefore, the boy should be returned to them. The Holy Prophet admitted his argument and Abu Jandal was returned to his oppressors.
When the document was finished, the Holy Prophet spoke to the Companions and told them to slaughter their sacrificial animals at that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim garments, but no one moved from his place. The Holy Prophet repeated the order thrice but the Companions were so overcome by depression and dejection that they did not comply. During his entire period of apostleship on no occasion had it ever happened that he should command his Companions to do a thing and they should not hasten to comply with it. This caused him a great shock, and he repaired to his tent and expressed his grief before his wife, Hadrat Umm Salamah. She said, "You may quietly go and slaughter your own camel and call the barber and have your head shaved. After that the people would automatically do what you did and would understand that whatever decision had been taken would not be changed. " Precisely the same thing happened. The people slaughtered their animals, shaved their heads or cut their hair short and put off the pilgrim garb, but their hearts were still afflicted with grief.
Later, when this caravan was returning to Madinah, feeling depressed and dejected at the truce of Hudaibiyah, this Surah came down at Dajnan (or according to some others, at Kura' al-Ghamim), which told the Muslims that the treaty that they were regarding an their defeat, was indeed a great victory. After it had come down, the Holy Prophet summoned the Muslims together and said: "Today such a thing has been sent down to me, which is more valuable to me than the world and what it contains. " Then be recited this Surah, especially to Hadrat Umar, for he was the one who was feeling most dejected.
Although the believers were satisfied when they heard this Divine Revelation, not much longer afterwards the advantages of this treaty began to appear one after the other until every one became fully convinced that this peace treaty indeed was a great victory:
(1) In it for the first time the existence of the Islamic State in Arabia was duly recognized. Before this in the eyes of the Arabs the position of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions was no more than of mere rebels against the Quraish and other Arab tribes, and they regarded them as the outlaws. Now the Quraish themselves by concluding this agreement with the Holy Prophet recognized his sovereignty over the territories of the Islamic State and opened

the way for the Arab tribes to enter treaties of alliance with either of the political powers they liked.
(2) By admitting the right of pilgrimage to the House of Allah for the Muslims, the Quraish also admitted that Islam was not an anti-religious creed, as they had so far been thinking, but it was one of the admitted religions of Arabia, and like the other Arabs, its followers also had the right to perform the rites of hajj and umrah. This diminished the hatred in the Arabs hearts that had been caused by the propaganda made by the Quraish against Islam.
(3) The signing of a no-war pact for ten years provided full peace to the Muslims, and spreading to every nook and corner of Arabia they preached Islam with such spirit and speed that within two years after Hudaibiyah the number of the people who embraced Islam far exceeded those who bad embraced it during the past 19 year or so. It was all due to this treaty that two years later when in consequence of the Quraish's violating the treaty the Holy Prophet invaded Makkah, he was accompanied by an army 10, 000 strong, whereas on the occasion of Hudaibiyah only 1, 400 men had joined him in the march.
(4) After the suspension of hostilities by the Quraish the Holy Prophet had the opportunity to establish and strengthen Islamic rule in the territories under him and to turn the Islamic society into a full fledged civilization and way of life by the enforcement of Islamic law. This is that great blessing about which Allah says in verse 3 of Surah Al-Ma'idah : "Today I have perfected your Religion for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the Way of Life for you. " (for explanation, see Introduction to Surah Al-Ma'idah and its E. N. 15).
(5) Another gain that accrued from the truce with the Quraish was that being assured of peace from the south the Muslims overpowered all the opponent forces in the north and central Arabia easily. Just three months after Hudaibiyah, Khaibar, the major stronghold of the Jews, was conquered and after it the Jewish settlements of Fadak, Wad-il Qura, Taima and Tabuk also fell to Islam one after the other. Then all other tribes of central Arabia, which were bound in alliance with the Jews and Quraish, came under the sway of Islam. Thus, within two years after Hudaibiyah the balance of power in Arabia was so changed that the strength of the Quraish and pagan gave way and the domination of Islam became certain.
These were the blessings that the Muslims gained from the peace treaty which they were looking upon as their defeat and the Quraish as their victory. However, what had troubled the Muslims most in this treaty, was the condition about the fugitives from Makkah and Madinah, that the former would be returned and the latter would not be returned. But not much long afterwards this condition also proved to be disadvantageous for the Quraish, and experience revealed what far reaching consequences of it had the Holy Prophet fore seen and then accepted it. A few days after the treaty a Muslim of Makkah, Abu Basir, escaped from the Quraish and reached Madinah. The Quraish demanded him back and the Holy Prophet returned him to their men who had been sent from Makkah to arrest him. But while on the way to Makkah he

again fled and went and sat on the road by the Red Sea shore, which the trade caravans of the Quraish took to Syria. After that every Muslim who succeeded in escaping from the Quraish would go and join Abu Basir instead of going to Madinah, until 70 men gathered there. They would attack any Quraish caravan that passed the way and cut it into pieces at last, the Quraish themselves begged the Holy Prophet to call those men to Madinah, and the condition relating to the return of the fugitives of itself became null and void. The Surah should be read with this historical background in view in order to fully understand it.

49. Hujuraat:

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 4 in which the word hujurat has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Traditions show and the subject matter of the Surah also supports the same that this Surah is a collection of the commandments and instructions sent down on different occasions, which have been put together because of the relevancy of the theme. Moreover, the traditions also show that most of these commandments were sent down during the final stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Madinah. For instance, about verse 4 the commentators state that it was sent down concerning the Bani Tamim whose deputation had arrived in Madinah and started calling out to the Holy Prophet from outside the apartments (hujurat) of his wives, and according to all biographical books on the Holy Prophet's life this deputation had visited Madinah in A. H. 9. Likewise, about verse 6 a large number of the traditions of Hadith confirm that it was sent down concerning Walid bin Uqbah whom the Holy Prophet had sent to collect the zakat from the Bani al-Mustaliq, and it is well known that Walid bin Uqabah had become a Muslim on the conquest of Makkah.

Subject Matter and Topics

The subject matter of this Surah is to teach the Muslims the manners worthy of true believers. In the first five verses they have been taught the manners they should observe with regard to Allah and His Messenger.

Then, they have been given the instruction that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act according to it, without due thought. If information is received about a person, a group or a community, it should be seen carefully whether the means of the information is reliable or not. If the means is not reliable, it should be tested and examined to see whether the news is authentic or not before taking any action on it.

Then, it has been told what attitude should the other Muslims adopt in case two groups of the Muslims fall to mutual fighting. Then the Muslims have been exhorted to safeguard against the evils that corrupt collective life and spoil mutual relationships. Mocking and taunting each other, calling others by nicknames, creating suspicions, prying into other people's affairs and backbiting are the evils which are not only sins in themselves but they also corrupt society. Allah has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that cause universal corruption in the world have been condemned. Nations and tribes and families pride of Ancestry and their looking down upon others as inferior to themselves and their pulling down others only for the sake of establishing their own superiority is an important factor that has filled the world with injustices and tyranny. Allah in a brief verse has cut at the root of this evil by stating that all men are descendants of the same one pair and their division into tribes and communities is only for the sake of recognition, not for boasting and pride, and there is no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the other except on the basis of moral excellence.

In conclusion, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal Profession of the Faith but to believe in Allah and His messenger truly, to obey them in practical life and to exert sincerely with one's self and wealth in the cause of Allah. True believers are only those who adopt this attitude. As for those who profess Islam merely orally without affirmation by the heart and then adopt an attitude as if they had done someone a favor by accepting Islam, may be counted among the Muslims in the world, may even be treated as Muslims in society, but they cannot be counted as believers in the sight of Allah.

50. Qaaf:

Name

The Surah derives its name from the initial letter Qaaf, thereby implying that it is the Surah which opens with the alphabetic letter Qaaf.

Period of Revelation

There is no authentic tradition to show as to when exactly this Surah was sent down. A study of the subject matter, however, reveals that its period of revelation is the second stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, which lasted from the third year of the Prophethood till the fifth year. We have given the characteristics of this period in the Introduction to the Sarah Al-An`aam. In view of those characteristics it can be said that this Surah might have been sent down in about the 5th year, when the antagonism of the disbelievers had become quite intense but had not yet assumed tyrannical proportions.

Theme and Topics

Authentic traditions show that the Holy Prophet used to recite this Surah generally in the Prayer on the Eid days. A woman named Umm Hisham bin Harithah, who was a neighbor of the Holy Prophet, says that she was able to commit Surah Qaaf to memory only because she often heard it from the Holy Prophet in the Friday sermons. According to some other traditions he often recited it in the Fajr Prayer. This makes it abundantly clear that this was an important Surah in the sight of the Holy Prophet. That is why he made sure that its contents reached as many people as possible over and over again.

This reason for this importance can be easily understood by a careful study of the Surah. The theme of the entire Surah is the Hereafter. When the Holy Prophet started preaching his message in Makkah what surprised the people most was the news that people would be resurrected after death, and they would have to render an account of their deeds.

They said that that was impossible; human mind could not believe that that would happen.
After all, how could it be possible that when the body had disintegrated into dust the scattered particles would be reassembled after hundreds of thousands of years to make up the same body once again and raised up as a living body, Allah in response sent down this discourse. In it, on the one hand, arguments have been given for the possibility and occurrence of the Hereafter in a brief way, in short sentences, and, on the other, the people have been warned, as if to say: "Whether you express wonder and surprise, or you regard it as something remote from reason, or deny it altogether, in any case it cannot change the truth.
The absolute, un-alterable truth is that Allah knows the whereabouts of each and every particle of your body that has scattered away in the earth, and knows where and in what state it is. Allah's one signal is enough to make all the scattered particles gather together again and to make you rise up once again as you had been made in the first instance. Likewise, your this idea that you have been created and left free to yourselves in the world and that you have not been made answerable to anyone, is no more than a misunderstanding. The fact is that not only is Allah Himself directly aware of each act and word of yours, even of the ideas that pass in your mind, but His angels also are attached to each one of you, who are preserving the record of whatever you do and utter. When the time comes, you will come out of your graves at one call just as young shoots of vegetable sprout up from the earth on the first shower of the rain.
Then this heedlessness which obstructs your vision will be removed and you will see with your own eyes all that you are denying today. At that time you will realize that you had not been created to be irresponsible in this world but accountable to all your deeds the meeting out of the rewards and punishments, the Hell and Heaven, which you regard as impossible and imaginary things, will at that time become visible realities for you in consequence of your enmity and opposition to the Truth you will be cast into the same Hell which you regard as remote from reason today and the ones who fear the Merciful God and return to the path of righteousness, will be admitted to the same Paradise at whose mention you now express wonder and surprise.

51. Zhaariyaat:

Name
It is derived from the very first word wadh-dhariyat,
which implies that it is a Surah which begins with the word adh-dhariyaat.
Period of Revelation
The subject matter and the style clearly show that it was sent down in the period when although the Holy Prophet's invitation was being resisted and opposed with denial and ridicule and false accusations stubbornly, persecution had not yet started. Therefore, this Surah also seems to have been revealed in the same period in which the Surah Qaaf was revealed.
Subject Matter and Topics

The Surah mostly deals with the Hereafter, and in the end it presents the invitation to Tauhid. In addition, the people have also been warned that refusal to accept the message of the Prophets and persistence in the concepts and creeds of ignorance have proved to be disastrous for those nations themselves which have adopted this attitude and way of life in the past.

About the Hereafter what this Surah presents in short but pithy sentences is this: The people's different and conflicting beliefs about the end of human life are themselves an express proof that none of these beliefs and creeds is based on knowledge; everyone by himself has formed an ideology on the basis of conjecture and made the same his creed. Someone thought that there would be no life-after-death; someone believed in the life-after-death, but in the form of the transmigration of souls someone believed in the life hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but invented different sorts of props and supports to escape retribution. About a question of such vital and fundamental importance a wrong view of which renders man's whole life-work wrong and waste and ruins his future for ever, it would be a disastrous folly to build an ideology only on the basis of speculation and conjecture, without knowledge. It would mean that man should remain involved in a grave misunderstanding, pass his whole life in the heedlessness of error, and after death should suddenly meet with a situation for which he had made no preparation at all. There is only one way of forming the right opinion about such a question, and it is this: Man should seriously ponder over the knowledge about the Hereafter that the Prophet of Allah is conveying to him from Him, and should study carefully the system of the earth and heavens and his own existence: and should see whether the evidence of that knowledge's being sound and correct is afforded by everything around him or not. In this regard, the arrangement of the wind and rain, the structure of the earth and the creatures found on it, man's own self, the creation of the heavens and of everything in the world in the form of pairs have been presented as evidence of the Hereafter, and instances have been cited from human history to show that the temper(??) of the empire of the Universe requires that the law of retribution must operate here.

After this, giving the invitation to Tauhid briefly, it has been said : "Your Creator has not created you for the service of others but for His own service. He is not like your false gods, which receive sustenance from you and godhead of which cannot function without your help, but He is a God Who is the Sustainer of all, Who does not stand in need of sustenance from anyone and Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might.

In this very connection, it has also been stated that whenever the Prophets of Allah have been opposed and resisted, they have not been opposed and resisted on the basis of any rational ground but on the basis of the same obduracy and stubbornness and false pride that is being shown against the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there is no other motive for it than rebellion and arrogance. Then the Holy Prophet has been instructed not to bother about the rebels but to go on performing his mission of invitation and admonition, for it is useful and beneficial for the believers

although it may not be so for the other people. As for the wicked people who still persist in their rebellion, they should know that their predecessors who followed the same way of life, have already received their shares of the punishment, and these people's share of the punishment has been made ready for them.

52. Tuur:

Name

It is derived from the very first cord "WatTur-i. "

Period of Revelation

From the internal evidence of the subject matter it appears that this Surah too was revealed in the same stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah in which the Surah Adh-Dhariyat was revealed. While going through it one can clearly feel that during the period of its revelation the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was being showered with objections and accusations but there is no evidence yet to show that severe persecution of the Muslims had started.

Subject Matter and Topics

The subject matter of its first section (vv. 1-28) is the Hereafter. As arguments for its possibility, necessity and occurrence had already been given in Surah Adh-Dhariyat, these have not been repeated here. However, swearing an oath by some realities and signs which testify to the Hereafter, it has been stated most emphatically that it will surely come to pass, and none has the power to prevent its occurrence. Then, it has been stated as to what will be the fate of those who deny it when it actually occurs, and how will those who believe in it and adopt the way of piety and righteousness accordingly, be blessed by Allah.

Then, in the second section (vv. 29-49) the Quraish chiefs' attitude towards the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah he upon him) has been criticized. They called him a sorcerer, a madman, or a poet, and would thus mislead the common people against him so that they should not pay any serious attention to the message he preached. They looked upon him as a calamity that had suddenly descended on them and would openly wish that he met with a disaster so that they were rid of him. They accused him of fabricating the Qur'an by himself and of presenting it in the name of Allah, and this was, God forbid, a fraud that he was practicing. They would often taunt him, saying that God could not have appointed an ordinary man like him to the office of Prophethood. They expressed great disgust at his invitation and message and would avoid him as if he was asking them for a reward for it. They would sit and take counsels together to devise schemes in order to put an end to his mission. And while they did all this they never realized what creeds of ignorance they were involved in and how selflessly and sincerely was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exerting himself to deliver them from their error. While criticizing them for this attitude and conduct, Allah has put them certain questions, one after the other, each of which is either an answer to some objection of theirs, or a criticism of some error. Then, it has been said that it would absolutely be of no avail to show them a miracle in order to

convince them of his Prophethood, for they were such stubborn people as would misinterpret anything they were shown only to avoid affirming the faith.
In the beginning of this section as well as in its end, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been given the instruction that he should persistently continue giving his invitation and preaching his message in spite of the accusations and objections of his opponents and enemies, and should endure their resistance patiently till Allah's judgment comes to pass. Besides, he has been consoled, as if to say "Your Lord has not left you alone to face your enemies, after raising you as a Prophet, but He is constantly watching over you. Therefore, endure every hardship patiently till the Hour of His judgment comes, and seek through praising and glorifying your Lord the power that is required for exerting in the cause of Allah under such conditions.

53. Najm:

Name
The Sarah derives its name from the very first word
wan Najm. This title also does not relate to the subject matter, but is a name given to the Surah as a symbol.
Period of Revelation
According to a Tradition related by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud and Nasai, on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud, the first Surah in which a versa requiring the performance of a sajdah (prostration) as sent down, is Surah An-Najm. The parts of this Hadith which have been reported by Aswad bin Yazid, Abu Ishaq and Zubair bin Mu'awiyah from Hadrat Ibn Mas'ud, indicate that this is the first Surah of the Qur'an, which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had publicly recited before an assembly of the Quraish (and according to Ibn Marduyah, in the Ka'bah) in which both the believers and the disbelievers were present. At the end, when he recited the verse requiring the performance of a sajdah and fell down in prostration, the whole assembly also fall down in prostration with him, and even those chiefs of the polytheists who were in the forefront of the opposition to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could not resist falling down in prostration. Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) says that he saw only one man, Umayyah bin Khalaf, from among the disbelievers, who did not fall down in prostration but took a little dust and rubbing it on his forehead said that that was enough for him. Later, as Ibn Mas'ud relates, he saw this man being killed in the state of disbelief.
Another eye witness of this incident is Hadrat Muttalib bin Abi Wada'ah, who had not yet become a Muslim. Nasai and Musnad Ahmad contain his own words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet recited the Surah An-Najm and performed the sajdah and the whole assembly fell down in prostration along with him, I did not perform the sajdah. Now to compensate for the same whenever I recite this Surah I make sure never to abandon its performance. "

Ibn Sad says that before this, in the Rajab of the 5th year of Prophethood, a small group of the Companions had emigrated to Abyssinia. Then, when in the Ramadan of the same year this incident took place the news spread that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had recited Surah An-Najm publicly in the assembly of the Quraish and the whole assembly, including the believers as well as the disbelievers, had fallen down in prostration with him. When the emigrants to Abyssinia heard this news they formed the impression that the disbelievers of Makkah had become Muslims. Thereupon, some of them returned to Makkah in the Shawwal of the 5th year of Prophethood, only to learn that the news was wrong and the conflict between Islam and disbelief was raging as furiously as before. Consequently, the second emigration to Abyssinia took place, in which many more people left Makkah. Thus, it becomes almost certain that this Surah was revealed in the Ramadan of 5th year of Prophethood.

Historical Background

The details of the period of revelation as given above point to the conditions in which this Surah was revealed. During the first five years of his appointment as a Prophet, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been extending invitation to Allah's Religion by presenting the Divine Revelations before the people only in private and restricted meetings and assemblies. During this whole period he could never have a chance to recite the Quran before a common gathering openly, mainly because of the strong opposition and resistance from the disbelievers. They were well aware of how magnetic and captivating was the Holy Prophet's personality and his way of preaching and how impressive were the Revelations of the Qur'an. Therefore, they tried their best to avoid hearing it themselves and to stop others also from hearing it and to suppress his invitation by false propaganda by spreading every kind of suspicion against him. For this object, on the one hand, they were telling the people that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had gone astray and was now bent upon misleading others as well; on the other hand, they would raise on uproar whenever he tried to present the Qur'an before the people so that no one could know what it was for which he was being branded as a misled and misguided person.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) suddenly stood up one day to make a speech in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, where a large number of the Quraish had gathered together. Allah at that time made him deliver this discourse, which we have now in the form of the Surah An-Najm with us. Such was the intensity of the impression that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) started reciting it the opponents were so completely overwhelmed that they could not think of raising any disorder, and when at the conclusion he fell down in prostration, they too fell down in prostration along with him. Later they felt great remorse at the weakness they had involuntarily shown. The people also started taunting them to the effect that whereas they had been forbidding others to listen to the Qur'an, that day not only had they themselves listened to it, with complete absorption but had even fallen down in prostration along with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At last, they had to invent a story in order to get rid of

the people's taunt and ridicule. They said "After he had recited: afara'ait-umul Lata wal Uzza wa Manat ath-thalitha-al ukhra, we heard from Muhammad the words: tilk al-gharaniqa-tal-'ula, wa anna shafa'at-u-hunna latarja: 'They are exalted goddesses: indeed, their intercession may be expected. ' From this we understood that Muhammad had returned to our faith. " As a matter of fact, only a mad person could think that in the context of this Surah the sentences they claimed to have heard could have any place and relevance. (For details, please see E. N. 's 96 to 301 of Surah Al Hajj).

Subject Matter and Topics

The theme of the discourse is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah about the error of the attitude that they had adopted towards the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "Muhammad is neither deluded nor gone astray, as you are telling others in your propaganda against him, nor has he fabricated this teaching of Islam and its message, as you seem to think he has. In fact, whatever he is presenting is nothing but Revelation which is sent down to him. The verities that be presents before you, are not the product of his own surmise and speculation but realities of which he himself is an eye witness. He has himself seen the Angel through whom this knowledge is conveyed to him. He has been directly made to observe the great Signs of his Lord: whatever he says is not what he has himself thought out but what he has seen with his own eyes. Therefore, your disputing and wrangling with him is just like the disputing and wrangling of a blind man with a man of sight over a thing which the blind man cannot see but he can see. "

After this, three things have been presented in their successive order : First, the listeners have been made to understand that: "The religion that you are following is based on mere conjecture and invented ideas. You have set up a few goddesses like Lat and Manat and Uzza as your deities, whereas they have no share whatever in divinity. You regard the angels as the daughters of Allah, whereas you regard a daughter as disgraceful for your own selves. You think that these deities of fours can influence Allah in your favor, whereas the fact is that all the angels together, who are stationed closest to Allah, cannot influence Him even in their own favor. None of such beliefs that you have adopted, is based on knowledge and reason, but are wishes and desires for the sake of which you have taken some whims as realities. This is a grave error. The right and true religion is that which is in conformity to the reality, and the reality is never subject to the people's wishes and desires so that whatever they may regard as a reality and truth should become the reality and truth. Speculation and conjecture cannot help to determine as to what is according to the truth and what is not; it is knowledge. When that knowledge is presented before you, you turn away from it, and brand the one who tells you the truth as misguided. The actual cause of your being involved in this error is that you are heedless of the Hereafter. Only this world is your goal. Therefore, you have neither any desire for the knowledge of reality, nor you bother to see 'whether the beliefs you hold are according to the truth or not.

Secondly, the people have been told that: Allah is the caster and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The righteous is he who follows His way, and the misguided he who has turned away from His way. The error of the misguided and the righteousness of the righteous are not hidden from Him. He knows whatever everyone is doing: He will requite the evil with evil and the good with good. The final judgment will not depend on what you consider yourself to be, and on tall claims you make of your purity and chastity but on whether you are pious or impious, righteous or unrighteous, in the sight of God. If you refrain from major sins, He in His mercy will overlook your minor errors. ".

Thirdly, a few basic principles of the true Religion which had been presented hundreds of years before the revelation of the Qur'an in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses have been reiterated so that the people did not remain involved in the misunderstanding that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had brought some new and novel religion, but they should know that these are the fundamental truths which the former Prophets of Allah have always been presenting in their respective ages. Besides, the same Books have been quoted to confirm the historical facts that the destruction of the 'Ad and the Thamud and of the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot was not the result of accidental calamities, but Allah has destroyed them in consequence of the same wickedness and rebellion from which the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to refrain and desist in any case.

After presenting these themes and discourses the Surah has been concluded, thus: "The Hour of Judgment has approached near at hand, which no one can avert. Before the occurrence of that Hour you are being warned through Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Quran in the like manner as the former people had been warned before. Now, is it this warning that you find novel and strange? Which you mock and ridicule? Which you turn away from and cause disorder so that no one else also is able to hear what it is ? Don't you feel like weeping at your folly and ignorance? Abandon this attitude and behavior, bow down to Allah and serve Him alone! "

This was that impressive conclusion hearing which even the most hardened deniers of the Truth were completely overwhelmed, and when after reciting these verses of Divine Word the Holy Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fell down in prostration, they too could not help falling down in prostration along with him.

54. Qamar:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the very first verse Wan shaqq al-Qamar, thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word al-Qamar has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The incident of the shaqq-al-Qamar (splitting of the moon) that has been mentioned in it, determines its period of revelation precisely. The traditionists and commentators are agreed that this incident took place at Mina in Makkah about five years before the Holy Prophet's hijra to Madinah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Surah the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned for their stubbornness which they had adopted against the invitation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The amazing and wonderful phenomenon of the splitting of the Moon was a manifest sign of the truth that the Resurrection, of which the Holy Prophet was giving them the news, could take place and that it had approached near at hand. The great sphere of the Moon had split into two distinct parts in front of their very eyes. The two parts had separated and receeded so much apart from each other that to the on-lookers one part had appeared on one side of the mountain and the other on the other side of it. Then, in an instant the two had rejoined. This was a manifest proof of the truth that the system of the Universe was neither eternal nor immortal, it could be disrupted. Huge stars and Planets could split asunder, disintegrate, collide with each other, and everything that had been depicted in the Quran In connection with the description of the details of Resurrection, could happen. Not only this : it was also a portent that the disintegration of the system of the Universe had begun and the time was near when Resurrection would take place. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) invited the people's attention to this event only with this object in view and asked them to mark it and be a witness to it. But the disbelievers described it as a magical illusion add persisted in their denial. For this stubbornness they have been reproached in this Surah.

At the outset it has been said: "These people neither believe in the admonition, nor learn a lesson from history, nor affirm faith after witnessing manifest signs with their eyes. Now they would believe only when Resurrection has taken place and they would be rushing out of their graves towards the Summoner on that Day. "

Then, the stories of the people of Noah and of 'Ad and Thamud and of the peoples of Lot and the Pharaoh have been related briefly and they have been reminded of the terrible punishments that these nations suffered when they belied and disregarded the warnings given by the Prophets of God. After the narration of each story the refrain that has been provided is : "This Qur'an is an easy means of admonition, which if a nation takes to heart and thereby takes the Right Way, the torment that descended on the former nations could be avoided. But it would indeed be a folly if instead of heeding the admonition through this easy means, one persisted in heedlessness and disbelieved until one was overtaken by the torment itself. "

Likewise, after citing admonitary precedents from the history of the former nations, the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and warned to this effect: "If you too adopt the same attitude and conduct for which the other nations have already been punished, why will you not be punished for it? Are you in any way a superior people that you should be treated differently from others? Or, have you received a deed of amnesty that you will not be punished for the crime for which others have been punished? And if you feel elated at your great numbers, you will soon see that these very numbers of yours are put to rout (on the battlefield) and on the Day of Resurrection you will be dealt with even more severely. "

In the end, the disbelievers have been told that Allah does not need to make lengthy preparations to bring about Resurrection. No sooner does He give a simple command for it than it will take place immediately. Like everything else the Universe and mankind also have a destiny. According to this destiny everything happens at its own appointed time. It cannot be so that whenever somebody gives a challenge, Resurrection is brought about in order to convince him. If you adopt rebellion because you do not see it coming, you will only be adding to your own distress and misfortune. For your record which is being prepared by Divine agents, has not left any misdeed of yours, great or small, unrecorded.

55. Rahman:

Name

This Surah is entitled Ar Rahman, the word with which it begins. This title, however, deeply relates to the subject matter of the Surah too, for in it, from the beginning to the end, the manifestations and fruits of Allah's attribute of mercy and grace have been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The commentators generally hold the view that this is a Makki Surah, though according to some traditions which have been cited on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Ikrimah and Qatadah, it was revealed at Madinah. But, firstly, there are also some other traditions from these very authorities, which contradict this view; secondly, its subject matter bears a closer resemblance with the Makki Surahs than with the Madani Surahs; rather it appears to belong to the very early Makkah period. However, there are several authentic traditions which testify that it had been revealed in Makkah itself many years before the hijra.

Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Hadarat Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr (may Allah bless them both), to the effect: "I saw the Messenger of Allah offering his Prayers in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah facing the corner in which the "Black Stone" is fixed. This relates to the time when the Divine Command, fasda bi-ma tumar ("So, proclaim publicly, O Prophet, what you are being commanded") had not yet been revealed. The polytheists at that time were hearing the words, Fa-biayyi alaa'i Rabbi kuma tukadhdhi ban, being recited by him in the Prayer. " This shows than this Surah had been sent down even before Surah Al-Hijr.

Al-Bazzar, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Daraqutni (in Al Afrad), Ibn Marduyah and Ibn Al Khatib (in At-Tarikh) have related, on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar, that once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Aliah be upon him) recited Surah Ar-Rahman himself, or heard it recited before him : then he said to the people: How is it that I am not hearing from you the kind of good answer that the jinn had given to their Lord? When the people asked what it was he replied: "As I recited the Divine Words, Fa bi-ayyi alaa'i Rabbi-kuma tukadhdhiban, the jinn in response would repeat the words La bi shai'in min ni'mati Rabbi-na nukadhdhib: "We do not deny any of our Lord's blessings. "

A similar theme has been related by Tirmidhi, Haakim and Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Bazzar from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah. Their tradition contains these words: "When the people kept silent on hearing the Surah Ar-Rahman, the Holy Prophet said 'I recited this very Surah before the jinn in the night when they had gathered together to hear the Qur'an. They responded to it better than you have. As I recited the Divine Words, Fa bi ayyi alaa'i Rabbikuma tukadhdhiban ("O jinn and men, which blessings of your Lord will you deny? ") they would respond to it, saying: O our Lord, do not deny any of your blessings Praise is for You alone'! "

This tradition indicates that on the occasion of the incident that bas been related in Surah Al Ahqaf (vv. 29 - 32) of the jinn's hearing the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) he was reciting Surah Ar Rahman in the Prayer. This happened in the 10th year of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet had halted at Makkah on his way back from Ta'if. Although in some other traditions it has been reported that the Holy Prophet did not know then that the jinn were hearing him recite the Qur'an, but afterwards Allah had informed him of this, it is not unreasonable to suppose that just as Allah had informed him of the jinn's hearing the Qur'an so also Allah Himself might have told him as to what answer they were giving on hearing Surah Ar Rahman.

These traditions only indicate that Surah Ar Rahman had been revealed even before Surahs Al-Hijr and Al-Ahqaf. Besides, we come across another tradition which shows that it is one of those Surahs which were the earliest Revelations at Makkah. Ibn Ishaq has related this on the authority of Hadrat Urwah bin Zubair: The Companions one day said to one another: "The Quraish have never heard any one recite the Qur'an publicly to them, and who would read out the Divine Word aloud to them Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud said that he would. The Companions expressed the apprehension that he might be subjected to a harsh treatment and said that it should better be done by a person of a powerful family, who would protect him if the Quraish tried to subject him to violence. Hadrat Abdullah said: 'Let me alone : my Protector is Allah. ' So early next morning he went to the Ka'bah while the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their respective conferences. Hadrat Abdullah arrived at the Maqam (station of Abraham) and began to recite Surah Ar-Rahman raising his voice as he did so. The Quraish first tried for a while to understand what he was saying. Then, when they realized that it was the Word that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was representing as the Word of God, they fell upon him and began to hit him in the face. But Hadrat Abdullah was not deterred : he continued to receive the slaps and to read the Qur'an as long as he could, At last, when he returned with a swollen face, the Companions said that they apprehended the same. He replied: 'God's enemies were never so light for me as they were today. If you say I'll recite the Qur'an to them again tomorrow. ' They all said, 'No, you have done enough; you have made them listen to what they didn't want to bear. '" (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 336).

Theme and Subject Matter

This is the only Surah of the Qur'an in which besides men the jinn also, who are the other creation of the earth endowed with freedom of will and action, have been directly addressed, and both men and jinn have been made to realize the wonders of Allah's power, His countless blessings, their own helplessness and accountability before Him, and have been warned of the evil consequences of His disobedience and made aware of the best results of His obedience. Although at several other places in the Qur'an there are clear pointers to show that like the men the jinn too are a creation who have been endowed with freedom of will and action and are accountable, who have been granted the freedom of belief and unbelief, of obedience and disobedience, and among them too there are the believers and the unbelievers, the obedient and the rebellious, as among human beings, and among them too there exist such groups as have believed in the Prophets sent by God and in the Divine Books, this Surah clearly points out that the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'an is meant both for men and for jinn and that his Prophethood is not restricted to human beings alone.

Although in the beginning of the Surah the address is directed only to human beings, for to them only belongs the vicegerency" of the earth, among them only have the Messengers of Allah been raised, and in their tongues only have the Divine Books been revealed, yet from verse 13 onward both the men and the jinn have been addressed and one and the same invitation has been extended to both.

56. Waaqia:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-waqi'ah of the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas has given of the Surahs, first Surah Ta Ha was sent down, then Al-Waqi'ah and then Ash-Shuara. The same sequence has been reported from Ikrimah. This is supported also by the story that Ibn Hisham has related from Ibn Ishaq about the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It say's that when Hadarat Umar entered his sister's house, Surah Ta Ha was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Qur'an. Hadrat Umar first seized his brother-in-law and then his sister rose in defense of her husband, he hit her also and wounded her on the head. When Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: "Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains. " The sister said: "You are unclean because of your polytheism: "Only a clean person can touch it. " So, Hadrat Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Sarah Al-Waqi'ah had been sent down by that time for it contains the verse: La yamassu hu ill al mutahharun; and it had been established historically that Hadrat Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Habash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter, Tauhid and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Qur'an. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, then the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen in actual fact. In answer to this, it was said: "When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the Power to avert it, nor prove it to, be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes: (1) The foremost in rank and position; (2) the common righteous people and (3) those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last. " How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in vv. 7-56.

Then, in vv. 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from every thing else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question : What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to?

Then, in vv. 75-82 their suspicions in respect of the Qur'an have been refuted and they have been made to realize how fortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Qur'an is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Qur'an, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the Universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its Author is the same Being Who has created the Universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say "You think it is brought down by the devils to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the well guarded Tablet. "

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: "You may brad and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truths in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless: you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your children; you cannot save your religious guided and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your vary eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and your this assumption is correct that you

are all in all in the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.

57. Hadiid:

Name

The Surah takes its title from the sentence, Wa anzalna' l-hadida, of verse 25.

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Madani Surah, and a study of its subject matter shows that it was probably sent down some time during the interval between the Battle of Uhud and the Truce of Hudaibiyah. This was the time when the tiny Islamic State of Madinah had been hemmed in by the disbelievers and the handful of the ill equipped Muslims were entrenched against the combined power of entire Arabia. In this state Islam not only stood in need of the sacrifice of Life from its followers, but it also needed monetary help and assistance. In this Surah a forceful appeal has been made for the same. This view is further strengthened by verse 10 in which Allah has addressed the believers to the effect "Those of you who would spend and fight after the victory can never be equal to those who have spent and fought before the victory. " And the same is supported by the traditions that Ibn Marduyah has related on the authority of Hadrat Anas. In respect of the verse Alam ya'n-i lilladhina aamanu an takhsha'a qulubu-hum li-dhikrillah-i, he says that 17 years after the commencement of the revelation of the Qur'an this verse was sent down to arouse the believers to action. Reckoned thus the period of the revelation of this Surah falls between the 4th and the 5th year after the hijra.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is to exhort the Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah. At the most critical juncture of the history of Islam when it was engaged in a life and death struggle against Arab paganism, this Surah was revealed to persuade the Muslim's to make monetary sacrifices in particular, and to make them realize that Islam did not merely consist in verbal affirmation and some outward practices but its essence and spirit is sincerity towards Allah and His Religion. The faith of the one who was devoid of this spirit and who regarded his own self and wealth as dearer to himself than Allah and His Religion, was hollow and therefore of little worth in the sight of Allah. For this object, first the attributes of Allah Almighty have been mentioned so that the listeners may fully realize as to Who is addressing them. Then, the following themes have been expressed in sequence

(1) The inevitable demand of the Faith is that one should not shirk spending one's wealth for the sake of Allah. This would not only be contrary to the Faith but also

wrong realistically. For the wealth indeed belongs to Allah, on which man has been given proprietary rights only as His vicegerent. Yesterday this wealth was in other people's possession today it is with one particular man, and tomorrow it will pass into some one else's hand. Ultimately, it will go back to Allah, Who is the inheritor of everything in the universe. Only that much of this wealth will be of any use to a man, which he spends in the cause of Allah during the period it is in his possession.

(2) Although making sacrifices for the sake of Allah is commendable in any case, the true worth of these sacrifices is determined by the nature of the occasion. There is an occasion when the power of paganism is overwhelming and there is a danger that it might subdue and overcome Islam completely; there is another occasion when Islam is in a stronger position in its struggle against un-Islam and the believers are attaining victories. Both these states are not equal as regards their respective importance. Therefore, the sacrifices that are made in these different states would also not be equal. Those who sacrifice their lives and expend their wealth to further promote the cause of Islam when it is already strong cannot attain to the rank of those who struggled with their lives and their wealth to promote and uphold the cause of Islam when it was weak.

(3) Whatever is spent for the cause of the Truth is a loan on Allah, and Allah will not only return it increasing it manifold but will also give from Himself the best reward for it.

(4) In the Hereafter the Light shall be bestowed only on those believers who would have spent their wealth in the cause of Allah. As for the hypocrites who watched and served only their own interests in the world, and who least bothered whether the Truth or falsehood prevailed will be segregated from the believers in the Hereafter although they might have lived in close association with them in the world. They will be deprived of the Light, and they will be counted among the disbelievers.

(5) The Muslims should not behave like those followers of the earlier Books, whose lives have been. spent in the worship of the world and whose hearts have become hardened due to negligence with the passage of time. He cannot be a believer whose heart does not melt at the remembrance of Allah and does not bow to the Truth sent down by Him.

(6) The sincere upholders of the Truth and the true witnesses of the Faith in the sight of Allah are only those believers who spend their wealth in His way sincerely, without any desire of show.

(7) The life of this world is only a short lived spring and a means of pride and show. Its sports and pastimes, its adornments and decorations, its pride of place, its wealth and possessions, for which the people try to vie with one another, are transient. Its likeness is of the crop which flourishes and blooms, then turns pale and then finally is reduced to chaff. The everlasting life is the life hereafter when results of great consequence will be announced. Therefore, if one has to vie with another for something, one should strive for Paradise.

(8) Whatever good man meets with and whatever hardship he suffers in the world, are pre-ordained by Allah. A true believer is he who does not lose heart in affliction and is

not puffed up with pride in good times. It is the character of a hypocrite and disbeliever that he is puffed up with pride when Allah favors him with His blessings, behaved boastfully and shows stinginess when called upon to spend in the cause of the same God Who blessed him, and also counsels others to be stingy like himself.
(9) Allah sent His Messengers with clear signs and the Book and the Law of Justice so that the people may adhere to justice; besides, He sent down iron also so that power may be used to establish the Truth and vanquish falsehood. Thus, Allah likes to see as to who from among the people would rise to support and succor His true Religion even at the risk of their lives. These opportunities Allah has created for man's own advantage and development; otherwise Allah does not stand in need of others for His works.
(10) Prophets came from Allah in the past, and by their preaching some people adopted the Right Path, but most of them persisted in wickedness. Then the Prophet Jesus came, whose teachings brought about many moral improvements in the lives of the people, but his community invented monasticism. Now Allah has sent the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings). Those who affirm faith in him and pass their life fearing Allah's accountability, will be given by Allah a double share of His mercy and He will bless them with the Light by which they will see and walk the straight path among the crooked paths met with at every step in the life of this world. Although the followers of the earlier revelation regard themselves as the monopolists of Allah's bounties, the fact remains that Allah Himself controls His bounties He may bless with these whomever He pleases.

58. Mujadila:

Name
This Surah is entitled Al Mujadalah as well as Mujadilah, the title being derived from the word tujadiluka of the very first verse. As at the outset mention has been made of the woman who pleaded with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) the case of zihar pronounced by her husband and urged him to suggest a way out of the difficult situation in order to save her and, her children's life from ruin, and Allah has described her pleading by the word "mujadalah", the Surah came to be known by this very title. If it is read as "mujadalah", it would mean "pleading and arguing", and if it is read as "mujadilah", it would mean "the woman who pleaded and argued. "
Period of Revelation
There is no tradition to tell as to when this incident of pleading and arguing took place, but there is a hint in the subject matter of the Surah on the basis of which it can be said with certainty that it happened some time after the battle of the Trench (Shawwal, 5 A. H.). In Sauah Al-Ahzab, Allah while negating that an adopted son could be one's real son, had just said this and no more; "And Allah has not made those of your wives whom you divorce by zihar your mothers. " But in that Surah there was nothing to the effect that to divorce a wife by zihar was a sin or a crime, nor anything about the legal injunction concerning it. Contrary to it, in this Surah the whole law relating to zihar has

been laid down, which shows that these detailed injunctions were sent down some time after the brief reference to it in Surah Al-Ahzab.

Subject Matter and Topics

In this Surah instructions have been given to the Muslims about the different problems that confronted them at that time. From the beginning of the Surah to verse 6 legal injunctions about zihar have been given, along with which the Muslims have been strictly warned that it is contrary to their profession of the Faith that they should still persist in the practices of ignorance after they have accepted Islam, that they should break the bounds set by Allah, or refuse to abide by them, or that they should make their own rules and regulations contradictory to them. For this there is not only the punishment of disgrace and humiliation in the world but in the Hereafter too there will be strict accountability for it.

In vv. 7-10 the hypocrites have been taken to task for their secret whisperings and consultations by which they conspired and intrigued against the "Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and because of their hidden malice and grudge greeted him, like the Jews, in a manner as to wish him ill instead of well. In this connection, the Muslims have been consoled, as if to say: "These whisperings of the hypocrites can do no harm to you; therefore, you should go on doing your duty with full trust in Allah". Besides, they have also been taught this moral lesson: "The true believers, when they talk secretly together, do not talk of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger if they have to talk secretly together they should talk of goodness and piety. "

In vv. 11-13 the Muslims have been taught certain manners of social behavior and given instructions to eradicate certain social evils which were prevalent among the people then as they are today. If some people are sitting in an assembly, and more people arrive, they do not show even the courtesy as to squeeze in so as to make room for others, with the result that the new-comers have to keep standing, or to sit in the door-way, or to go back, or seeing that there is enough room yet start jumping over the people's heads to find room for themselves. This often used to be experienced in the Holy Prophet's assemblies. Therefore, Allah gave the instruction, as if to say: "Do not behave selfishly and narrow mindedly in your assemblies but do accommodate the new-comers also with an open heart. "

Likewise, another vice found among the people is that when they go on a visit to somebody (an important person, in particular), they prolong their sitting and do not at all mind that encroaching upon his time unduly would cause him hardship. Then, if he tells them to leave, they mind it; if he himself rises up from their assembly, they complain of his lack of manners; if he tells them indirectly that he has some other business also to attend to, for which he needs time, they turn a deaf ear to his request. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself also had to experience such misconduct of the people, who in their earnestness to benefit by his teaching did not at all see that they were wasting his precious time so badly needed for other important

works. At last, Allah in order to eradicate this bad manner, enjoined that when the people arc asked to rise up from an assembly, they should rise up and disperse.

Another vice prevalent among the people was that each person wished to have secret counsel individually with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) without any real need, or would like that he should approach him during an assembly and whisper something to him. This was not only embarrassing for the Holy Prophet but also annoying for the people who sat in the assembly. That is why Allah imposed the restriction that anyone who wanted to consult him in private, should first give away something in charity. The object was that the people should be warned of this bad manner and made to give it up. Thus, the restriction was kept in force for a short while, and when the people had corrected their behavior, it was withdrawn.

From verse 14 to the end of the Surah members of the Muslim society, which was a mixture of the sincere Muslims and the hypocrites and the waverers, have been told plainly as to what is the criterion of sincerity in Islam. One kind of Muslims are those who are friends with the enemies of Islam: they do not hesitate for the sake of their interests to be treacherous to the religion which they profess to believe in; they spread all sorts of doubts and suspicions against Islam and prevent the people from adopting the Way of Allah. But since they are part of the Muslim community their false profession of Faith serves them as a cover and shield. The second kind of Muslims are those who, in the matter of Allah's Religion, do not care even for their own father, brother, children, and family, to say nothing of others. They do not cherish any feeling of love for the person who is an enemy of God and His Messenger and His Religion. Allah in these verses has explicitly stated that the people of the first kind, in fact, belong to Satan's party however hard they may try to convince others of their Islam by swearing oaths. And the honor of belonging to Allah's party is possessed only by the Muslims of the second kind. They alone are the true Muslims: they alone will attain to true success, and with them alone is Allah well pleased.

59. Hashr:

Name

The Surah derives its name from the mention of the word al-hashr in verse thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word al-hashr has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Bukhari and Muslim contain a tradition from Hadrat Sa'id bin Jubair to the effect "When I asked Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas about Surah Al-Hashr, he replied that it was sent down concerning the battle against the Bani an-Nadir just as Surah Al-Anfal was sent down concerning the Battle of Badr. In another tradition from Hadrat Sa'id bin Jubair, the words cited from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) are: Qul: surah an-Nadir: Say, it is Surah an-Nadir. " The same thing has been related also from Mujahid, Qatadah, Zuhri, Ibn Zaid, Yazid bin Ruman, Muhammad bin Ishaq and others. They are unanimous that the followers of the Book whose banishment has been mentioned in it, imply the Bani an-Nadir. Yazid bin Ruman, Mujahid and Muhammad

bin Ishaq have stated that this whole Surah, from beginning to end, came down concerning this very battle.
As for the question as to when this battle took place, Imam Zuhri has stated on the authority of Urwah bin Zubair that it took place six months after the Battle of Badr. However, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham and Baladhuri regard it as an event of Rabi' al-Awwal, A. H. 4, and the same is correct. For all traditions agree that this battle took place after the incident of Bi'r Ma'unah, and historically also it is well known that the incident of Bir Ma'unah occurred after the Battle of Uhud and not before it.

Historical Background

In order to understand the subject matter of this Surah well, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the Madinah and Hejaz Jews, for without it one cannot know precisely the real causes of the Holy Prophet's dealing with their different tribes the way he did.
No authentic history of the Arabian Jews exists in the world. They have not left any writing of their own in the form of a book or a tablet which might throw light on their past, nor have the Jewish historians and writers of the non-Arab world made any mention of them, the reason being that after their settlement in the Arabian peninsula they had detached themselves from the main body of the nation, and the Jews of the world did not count them as among themselves. For they had given up Hebrew culture and language, even the names, and adopted Arabism instead. In the tablets that have been unearthed in the archaeological research in the Hejaz no trace of the Jews is found before the first century of the Christian era, except for a few Jewish names. Therefore, the history of the Arabian Jews is based mostly on the verbal traditions prevalent among the Arabs most of which bad been spread by the Jews themselves.
The Jews of the Hejaz claimed that they had come to settle in Arabia during the last stage of the life of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They said that the Prophet Moses had dispatched an army to expel the Amalekites from the land of Yathrib and had commanded it not to spare even a single soul of that tribe. The Israelite army carried out the Prophet's command, but spared the life of a handsome prince of the Amalekite king and returned with him to Palestine. By that time the Prophet Moses had passed sway. His successors took great exception to what the army had done, for by sparing the life of an Amalekite it had clearly disobeyed the Prophet and violated the Mosaic law. Consequently, they excluded the army from their community, and it had to return to Yathrib and settle there for ever. (Kitab al-Aghani, vol. xix, p. 94). Thus the Jews claimed that they had been living in Yathrib since about 1200 B. C. But, this had in fact no historical basis and probably the Jews had invented this story in order to overawe the Arabs into believing that they were of noble lineage and the original inhabitants of the land.
The second Jewish immigration, according to the Jews, took, place in 587 B. C. when Nebuchadnezzer, the king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. The Arab Jews said that several of their tribes at that time had come to settle in Wadi al-Qura, Taima, and Yathrib. (Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan).

But this too has no historical basis. By this also they might have wanted to prove that they were the original settlers of the area.
As a matter of fact, what is established is that when in A. D. 70 the Romans massacred the Jews in Palestine, and then in A. D. 132 expelled them from that land, many of the Jewish tribes fled to find an asylum in the Hejaz, a territory that was contiguous to Palestine in the south. There, they settled wherever they found water springs and greenery, and then by intrigue and through money lending business gradually occupied the fertile lands. Ailah, Maqna, Tabuk, Taima, Wadi al Qura, Fadak and Khaibar came under their control in that very period, and Banl Quraizah, Bani al-Nadir, Bani Bahdal, and Bani Qainuqaa` also came in the same period and occupied Yathrib.
Among the tribes that settled in Yathrib the Bani al Nadir and the Bani Quraizah were more prominent for they belonged to the Cohen or priest class. They were looked upon as of noble descent and enjoyed religious leadership among their co-religionists. When they came to settle in Madinah there were some other tribes living there before, whom they subdued and became practically the owners of this green and fertile land. About three centuries later, in A. D. 450 or 451, the great flood of Yaman occurred which has been mentioned in vv. 16-17 of Surah Sabaa above. As a result of this different tribes of the people of Sabaa were compelled to leave Yaman and disperse in different parts of Arabia. Thus, the Bani Ghassan went to settle in Syria, Bani Lakhm in Hirah (Iraq), Bani Khuzaah between Jeddah and Makkah and the Aus and the Khazraj went to settle in Yathrib. As Yathrib was under Jewish domination, they at first did not allow the Aus and the Khazraj to gain a footing and the two Arab tribes had to settle on lands that had not yet been brought under cultivation, where they could hardly produce just enough to enable them to survive. At last, one of their chiefs went to Syria to ask for the assistance of their Ghassanide brothers; he brought an army from there and broke the power of the Jews. Thus, the Aus and the Khazraj were able to gain complete dominance over Yathrib, with the result that two of the major Jewish tribes, Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizaha were forced to take quarters outside the city. Since the third tribe, Bani Qainuqaa`, was not on friendly terms with the other two tribes, it stayed inside the city as usual, but had to seek protection of the Khazraj tribe. As a counter measure to this Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizah took protection of the Aus tribe so that they could live in peace in the suburbs of Yathrib.
Before the Holy Prophet's arrival at Madinah until his emigration the following were the main features of the Jews position in Hejaz in general and in Yathrib in particular
(1) In the matter of language, dress, civilization and way of life they had completely adopted Arabism, even their names had become Arabian. Of the 12 Jewish tribes that had settled in Hejaz, none except the Bani Zaura retained its Hebrew name. Except for a few scattered scholars none knew Hebrew. In fact, there is nothing in the poetry of the Jewish poets of the pre-Islamic days to distinguish it from the poetry of the Arab poets in language, ideas and themes. They even intermarried with the Arabs. In fact, nothing distinguished them from the common Arabs except religion. Notwithstanding this, they had not lost their identity among the Arabs and had kept their Jewish prejudice alive

most ardently and jealously. They had adopted superficial Arabism because they could not survive in Arabia without it.

(2) Because of this Arabism the western orientalists have been misled into thinking that perhaps they were not really Israelites but Arabs who had embraced Judaism, or that at least majority of them consisted of the Arab Jews. But there is no historical proof to show that the Jews ever engaged in any proselytizing activities in Hejaz, or their rabbis invited the Arabs to embrace Judaism like the Christian priests and missionaries. On the contrary, we see that they prided themselves upon their Israelite descent and racial prejudices. They called the Arabs the Gentiles, which did not mean illiterate or uneducated but savage and uncivilized people. They believed that the Gentiles did not possess any human rights; these were only reserved for the Israelites, and therefore, it was lawful and right for the Israelites to defraud them of their properties by every fair and foul means. Apart from the Arab chiefs, they did not consider the common Arabs fit enough to have equal status with them even if they entered Judaism. No historical proof is available, nor is there any evidence in the Arabian traditions, that some Arab tribe or prominent clan might have accepted Judaism. However, mention has been made of some individuals, who had become Jews. The Jews, however, were more interested in their trade and business than in the preaching of their religion. That is why Judaism did not spread as a religion and creed in Hejaz but remained only as a mark of pride and distinction of a few Israelite tribes. The Jewish rabbis, however, had a flourishing business in granting amulets and charms, fortune telling and sorcery, because of which they were held in great awe by the Arabs for their "knowledge" and practical wisdom.

(3) Economically they were much stronger than the Arabs. Since they bad emigrated from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. Hence, they had captured the business of importing grain in Yathrib and the upper Hejaz and exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing also were mostly under their controls They were good at cloth weaving too. They had also set up wine shops here and there, where they sold wine which they imported from Syria. The Bani Qainuqaa` generally practiced crafts such as that of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker. In all these occupations, trade and business these Jews earned exorbitant profits, but their chief occupation was trading in money lending in which they had ensnared the Arabs of the surrounding areas. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp, bragging and boasting on the strength of borrowed money were deeply indebted to them. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once one was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arabs economically hollow, but it had naturally induced a deep rooted hatred among the common Arabs against the Jews.

(4) The demand of their trade and economic interests was that they should neither estrange one Arab tribe by befriending another, nor take part in their mutual wars. But, on the other hand, it was also in their interests, that they should not allow the Arabs to

be united and should keep them fighting and entrenched against each other, for they knew that whenever the Arab tribes united, they would not allow them to remain in possession of their large properties, gardens and fertile lands, which they had come to own through their profiteering and money lending business. Furthermore, each of their tribes also had to enter into alliance with one or another powerful Arab tribe for the sake of its own protection so that no other powerful tribe should overawe it by its might. Because of this they had not only to take part in the mutual wars of the Arabs but they often had to go to war in support of the Arab tribe to which their tribe was tied in alliance against another Jewish tribe which was allied to the enemy tribe. In Yathrib the Bani Quraizah and the Bani an-Nadir were the allies of the Aus while the Bani Qainuqaa` of the Khazraj. A little before the Holy Prophet's emigration, these Jewish tribes had confronted each other in support of their respective allies in the bloody war that took place between the Aus and the Khazraj at Buath.

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Such were the conditions when Islam came to Madinah, and ultimately an Islamic State came into existence after the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be Allah's peace) arrival there. One of the first things that he accomplished soon after establishing this state was unification of the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants into a brotherhood, and the second was that he concluded a treaty between the Muslims and the Jews on definite conditions, in which it was pledged that neither party would encroach on the rights of the other, and both would unite in a joint defense against the external enemies. Some important clauses of this treaty are as follows, which clearly show what the Jews and the Muslims had pledged to adhere to in their mutual relationship:

"The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. They shall sincerely wish one another well. Their relations will be governed by piety and recognition of the rights of others, and not by sin and wrongdoing. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as the war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the Apostle of God; Quraish and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib; Every one shall be responsible for the defense of the portion to which he belongs" (Ibn Hisham, vol. ii, pp. 147 to 150).

This was on absolute and definitive covenant to the conditions of which the Jews themselves had agreed. But not very long after this they began to show hostility towards the Holy Prophet of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Islam and the Muslims, and their hostility and perverseness went on increasing day by day. Its main causes were three:

First, they envisaged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) merely as a chief of his people, who should be content to have concluded a political agreement with them

and should only concern himself with the worldly, interests of his group. But they found that he was extending an invitation to belief in Allah and the Apostleship and the Book (which also included belief in their own Prophets and scriptures), and was urging the people to give up disobedience of Allah and adopt obedience to the Divine Commands and abide by the moral laws of their own prophets. This they could not put up with. They feared that if this universal ideological movement gained momentum it would destroy their rigid religiosity and wipe out their racial nationhood.

Second, when they saw that the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants were uniting into a brotherhood and the people from the Arab tribes of the surrounding areas, who entered Islam, were also joining this Islamic Brotherhood of Madinah and forming a religious community, they feared that the selfish policy that they had been following of sowing discord between the Arab tribes for the promotion of their own well being and interests for centuries, would not work in the new system, but they would face a united front of the Arabs against which their intrigues and machinations would not succeed.

Third, the work that the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's 'peace) was carrying out of reforming the society and civilization included putting an end to all unlawful methods" in business and mutual dealings. More than that; he had declared taking and giving of interest also as impure and unlawful earning. This caused them the fear that if his rule became established in Arabia, he would declare interest legally forbidden, and in this they saw their own economic disaster and death.

For these reasons they made resistance and opposition to the Holy Prophet their national ideal. They would never hesitate to employ any trick and machination, any device and cunning, to harm him. They spread every kind of falsehood so as to cause distrust against him in the people's minds. They created every kind of doubt, suspicion and misgiving in the hearts of the new converts so as to turn them back from Islam. They would make false profession of Islam and then would turn apostate so that it may engender more and more misunderstandings among the people against Islam and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). They would conspire with the hypocrites to create mischief and would cooperate with every group and tribe hostile to Islam. They would create rifts between the Muslims and would do whatever they could to stir them up to mutual feuds and fighting. The people of the Aus and the Khazraj tribes were their special target, with whom they had been allied for centuries. Making mention of the war of Buath before them they would remind them of their previous enmities so that they might again resort to the sword against each other and shatter their bond of fraternity into which Islam had bound them. They would resort to every kind of deceit and fraud in order to harm the Muslims economically. Whenever one of those with whom that had business dealings, would accept Islam, they would do whatever they could to cause him financial loss. If he owed them something they would worry and harass him by making repeated demands, and if they owed him something, they would withhold the payment and would publicly say that at the time the bargain was made he professed a different religion, and since he had changed his religion, they were no longer under any obligation towards him. Several instances of this nature have been

cited in the explanation of verse 75 of Surah Al Imran given in the commentaries by Tabari, Nisaburi, Tabrisi and in Ruh al Ma'ani.
They had adopted this hostile attitude against the covenant even before the Battle of Badr. But when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Quraish at Badr, they were filled with grief and anguish, malice and anger. They were in fact anticipating that in that war the powerful Quraish would deal a death blow to the Muslims. That is why even before the news of the Islamic victory reached Madinah they had begun to spread the rumor that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had fallen a martyr and the Muslims had been routed, and the Quraish army under Abu Jahl was advancing on Madinah. But when the battle was decided against their hopes and wishes, they burst with anger and grief. Ka`b bin Ashraf, the chief of the Bani an-Nadir, cried out: "By God, if Muhammad has actually killed these nobles of Arabia, the earth's belly would be better for us than its back. " Then he went to Makkah and incited the people to vengeance by writing and reciting provocative elegies for the Quraish chiefs killed at Badr. Then he returned to Madinah and composed lyrical verses of an insulting nature about the Muslim women. At last, enraged with his mischief, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) sent Muhammad bin Maslamah Ansaari in Rabi al-Awwal, A. H. 3, and had him slain. Ibn Sad, Ibn Hisham, Tabari).
The first Jewish tribe which, after the Battle of Badr, openly and collectively broke their covenant were the Bani Qainuqaa`. They lived in a locality inside the city of Madinah. As they practiced the crafts of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker, the people of Madinah had to visit their shops fairly frequently. They were proud of their bravery and valor. Being blacksmiths by profession even their children were well armed, and they could instantly muster 700 fighting men from among themselves. They were also arrogantly aware that they enjoyed relations of confederacy with the Khazraj and Abdullah bin Ubbay, the chief of the, Khazraj, was their chief supporter. At the victory of Badr, they became so provoked that they began to trouble and harass the Muslims and their women in particular, who visited their shops. By and by things came to such a pass that one day a Muslim woman was stripped naked publicly in their bazaar. This led to a brawl in which a Muslim and a Jew were killed. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself visited their locality, got them together and counseled them on decent conduct. But the reply that they gave was; "O Muhammad, you perhaps think we are like the Quraish; they did not know fighting; therefore, you overpowered them. But when you come in contact with us, you will see how men fight. "This was in clear words a declaration of war. Consequently, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allan's peace) laid siege to their quarters towards the end of Shawwal (and according to some others, of Dhi Qa'dah) A. H. 2. The siege had hardly lasted for a fortnight when they surrendered and all their fighting men were tied and taken prisoners. Now Abdullah bin Ubayy came up in support of them and insisted that they should be pardoned. The Holy Prophet conceded his request and decided that the Bani Qainuqaa`

would be exiled from Madinah leaving their properties, armor and tools of trade behind. (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham, Tarikh Tabari).
(continued. . .)
(continuing. . . 2) : Historical Background. . . . . .
For some time after these punitive measures (i. e. the banishment of the Qainuqaa` and killing of Ka`b bin Ashraf the Jews remained so terror stricken that they did not dare commit any further mischief. But later when in Shawwal, A. H. 3, the Quraish in order to avenge themselves for the defeat at Badr, marched against Madinah with great preparations, and the Jews saw that only a thousand men had marched out with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) as against three thousand men of the Quraish, and even they were deserted by 300 hypocrites who returned to Madinah, they committed the first and open breach of the treaty by refusing to join the Holy Prophet in the defense of the city although they were bound to it. Then, when in the Battle of Uhud the Muslims suffered reverses, they were further emboldened. So much so that the Bani an-Nadir made a secret plan to kill the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) though the plan failed before it could be executed. According to the details, after the incident of Bi'r Maunah (Mautah??) (Safar, A. H. 4) Amr bin Umayyah Damri slew by mistake two men of the Bani Amir in retaliation, who actually belonged to a tribe which was allied to the Muslims, but Amr had mistaken them for the men of the enemy. Because of this mistake their blood money became obligatory on the Muslims. Since the Bani an-Nadir were also a party in the alliance with the Bani Amir, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) went to their clan along with some of his Companions to ask for their help in paying the blood money. Outwardly they agreed to contribute, as he wished, but secretly they plotted that a person should go up to the top of the house by whose wall the Holy Prophet was sitting and drop a rock on him to kill him. But before they could execute their plan, Allah informed him in time and be immediately got up and returned to Madinah.
Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Holy Prophet at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Madinah within ten days; if anyone of them was found staying behind in their quarters, he would be put to the sword. Meanwhile Abdullah bin Ubayy sent them the message that he would help them with two thousand men and that the Bani Quraizah and Bani Ghatafan also would come to their aid; therefore, they should stand firm and should not go. On this false assurance they responded to the Holy Prophet's ultimatum saying that they would not leave Madinah and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, in Rabi' al-Awwal, A. H. 4, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege (which according to some traditions were 6 and according to others 15 days) they agreed to leave Madinah on the condition that they could retain all their property which they could carry on their camels, except the armor. Thus, Madinah was rid of this second mischievous tribe of Jews. Only two of the Bani an-Nadir became Muslims and stayed behind. Others went to Syria and Khaibar.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of the Surah as stated above, is an appraisal of the battle against the Bani an Nadir. In this, on the whole, four things have been discussed.

(1) In the first four verses the world has been, admonished to take heed of the fate that had just befallen the Bani an-Nadir. A major tribe which was as strong in numbers as the Muslims, whose people boasted of far more wealth and possession who were by no means ill equipped militarily and whose forts were well fortified could not stand siege even for a few Days, and expressed their readiness to accept banishment from their centuries old, well established settlement even though not a single man from among them was slain. Allah says that this happened not because of any power possessed by the Muslims but because the Jews had tried to resist and fight Allah and His Messenger, and those who dare to resist the power of Allah, always meet with the same fate.

(2) In verse 5, the rule of the law of war that has been enunciated is: the destruction caused in the enemy territory for military purposes does not come under "spreading mischief in the earth. "

(3) In vv 6-10 it has been stated how the lands and properties which come under the control of the Islamic State as a result of war or peace terms, are to be managed. As it was the first ever occasion that the Muslims took control of a conquered territory, the law concerning it was laid down for their guidance.

(4) In vv. 11-17 the attitude that the hypocrites had adopted on the occasion of the battle against the Bani an-Nadir has been reviewed and the causes underlying it have been pointed out.

(5) The whole of the last section (vv. 18-24) is an admonition for all those people who had professed to have affirmed the faith and joined the Muslim community, but were devoid of the true spirit of the faith. In it they have been told what is the real demand of the Faith, what is the real difference between piety and wickedness, what is the place and importance of the Quran which they professed to believe in, and what are the attributes of God in Whom they claimed to have believed.

60. Mumtahana:

Name

In verse 10 of this Surah it has been enjoined that the women who emigrate to dar al-Islam (the Islamic State) and claim to be Muslims, should be examined hence the title Al-Mumtahinah. The word is pronounced both as mumtahinah and as mumtahanah, the meaning according to the first pronunciation being "the Surah which examines", and according to the second, "the woman who is examined. "

Period of Revelation

The Surah deals with two incidents, the time of the occurrence of which is well known historically. The first relates to Hadrat Hatib bin Abz Balta'a, who, a little before the conquest of Makkah, had sent a secret letter to the Quraish chiefs informing them of the Holy Prophet's intention to attack them. The second relates to the Muslim women, who had started emigrating from Makkah to Madinah, after the conclusion of the Truce of

Hudaibiyah, and the problem arose whether they also were to be returned to the disbelievers, like the Muslim men, according to the conditions of the Truce. The mention of these two things absolutely determines that this Surah came down during the interval between the Truce of Hudaibiyah and the Conquest of Makkah. Besides, there is a third thing also that has been mentioned at the end of the Surah to the effect; What should the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) make the women to pledge when they come to take the oath of allegiance before him as believers? About this part also the guess is that this too was sent down some time before the conquest of Makkah, for after this conquest a large number of the Quraish women, like their men, were going to enter Islam simultaneously and had to be administered the oath of allegiance collectively.

Theme and Topics

This Surah has three parts;

The first part consists of vv. 1-9, and the concluding verse 13 also relates to it. In this strong exception has been taken to the act of Hadrat Hatib bin Abi Balta'a in that he had tried to inform the enemy of a very important war secret of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) only for the sake of safe guarding his family. This would have caused great bloodshed at the conquest of Makkah had it not been made ineffective in time. It would have cost the Muslims many precious lives; many of the Quraish would have been killed, who were to render great services to Islam afterward; the gains which were to accrue from conquering Makkah peacefully would have been lost, and all these serious losses would have resulted only because one of the Muslims had wanted to safeguard his family from the dangers of war. Administering a severe warning at this blunder Allah has taught the believers the lesson that no believer should, under any circumstances and for any motive, have relations of love and friendship with the disbelievers, who are actively hostile to Islam, and a believer should refrain from everything which might be helpful to them in the conflict between Islam and disbelief. However, there is no harm in dealing kindly and justly with those disbelievers, who may not be practically engaged in hostile activities against Islam and persecution of the Muslims.

The second part consists of vv. 10-11. In this a social problem has been settled, which was agitating the minds at that time. There were many Muslim women in Makkah, whose husbands were pagans, but they were emigrating and reaching Madinah somehow. Likewise, there were many Muslim men in Madinah, whose wives were pagans and had been left behind in Makkah. The question arose whether the marriage bond between them continued to be valid or not. Allah settled this problem for ever, saying that the pagan husband is not lawful for the Muslim women, nor the pagan wife lawful for the Muslim husband. This decision leads to very important legal consequences, which we shall explain in our notes below.

The third section consists of verse 12, in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been instructed to ask the women who accept Islam to pledge that they would refrain from the major evils that were prevalent among the womenfolk of

the pre-Islamic Arab society, and to promise that they would henceforth follow the ways of goodness which the Messenger of Allah may enjoin.

61. Saaf:

Name

The Surah derives its name from the sentence yuqatiluna fi sabil-i-hlsaff-an of verse 4; thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word saff occurred.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any reliable tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Surah probably was sent down in the period closely following the Battle of Uhud, for by reading between the lines perceives a clear description of the con

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to exhort the Muslims to adopt sincerity in Faith and to struggle with their lives in the cause of Allah. It is addressed to the Muslims with weak faith as well as those who had entered Islam with a false profession of the Faith and also the

At the outset the believers have been warned to the effect; "Allah indeed hates those people who say one thing and do another, and He indeed loves. those who fight in the cause of the Truth, standing like a solid structure, against the enemies of Allah. "'

In vv. 5-7 the people of the Holy Prophet's community have been warned that their attitude towards their Messenger and their Religion should not be like the attitude that the Israelites had adopted towards the Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them)

Then, in vv. 8-9 a proclamation has been made with the challenge: "The Jews and the Christians, and the hypocrites, who are conspiring with them, may try however hard they may to extinguish this Light of Allah, it will shine forth and spread in the world

In vv. 10-13, the believers have been told that the way to success both here and in the Hereafter is only one: that they should believe in Allah and His Messenger sincerely and should exert their utmost in Allah's Way with their selves and their wealth.

In conclusion, the believers have been exhorted to' the effect that just as the disciples of the Prophet Jesus had helped him in the cause of Allah, so should they also become "helpers of Allah", so that they too are blessed with the same kind of good pleasure

62. Jamu'a:

Name

It is derived from the sentence idha nudiya-lis-salat-imin-yaum-il-Jumu'ati of verse 9. Although in this Surah injunctions about the Friday congregational Prayer also have been given, yet "Jumu'ah" is not the title of its subject-matter as a whole, but???

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of the first section (vv. 1-8) is A. H. 7, and probably it was sent down, on the occasion of the conquest of Khaibar or soon after it. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Jarir have related on the authority of Hadrat Abu H

The second section (vv. 9-11) was sent down shortly after the emigration, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had established the Friday congregational Prayer on the 5th day after his arrival at Madinah. The incident that has been referred t

Theme and Subject Matter

As we have explained above, the two sections of this Surah were sent down in two different periods. That is why their themes as well as their audiences are different. Although there is a kind of harmony between them on account of which they have been put

The first section was sent down at a time when all Jewish efforts to obstruct the message of Islam during the past six years had failed. First. in Madinah as many as three of their powerful tribes had done whatever they could to frustrate the mission of the

(1) "You refused to believe in this Messenger only because he was born among a people whom you contemptuously call the "gentiles". You were under the false delusion that the Messenger must necessarily belong to your own community. You seemed to have b

(2) "You had been made bearers of the Torah, but you did not understand your responsibility for it nor discharged it as you should have. You are like the donkey which is loaded with books, and which does not know what burden it is bearing. Rather you ar

(3) "If you really were Allah's favorites and you were sure of having a p! ace of honor and high rank reserved with Him, you would not have feared death so much as to prefer a life of disgrace to death. It is only because of this fear of death that you

The second section that was sent down many years later, was appended to this Surah because in it Allah has bestowed Friday on the Muslims as against the Sabbath of the Jews, and Allah wanted to warn the Muslims not to treat their Friday as the Jews had tried...???

63. Munafiqoon:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence Idha jaa kal-munafiquna of verse 1. This is the name of the Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it a review has been made of the conduct and attitude of the hypocrites themselves.

Period of Revelation

As we shall explain below this Surah was sent down either during the Holy Prophet's return journey from his campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq, or immediately after his arrival back at Madinah, and we have established by argument and research in the Introduction to Surah An-Noor that the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq had taken place in Sha'ban A. H. 6: Thus, the date of the revelation of this Surah is determined precisely.

Historical Background

Before we mention the particular incident about which this Surah was sent down, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the hypocrites of Madinah, for the incident that occurred on this occasion was not a chance happening but had a whole series of events behind it, which ultimately led up to it. Before the Holy Prophet's emigration to

Madinah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the Khazraj. Muhammad bin Ishaq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this.
Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Madinah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the Emigration, invitation was being extended to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to come to Madinah, Hadarat Abbas bin Ubadah bin Nadlah Ansaari wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Holy Prophet, so that Madinah might become the center of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of Abbas bin Ubadah, and all its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Holy Prophet in the face of every danger. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, P. 89). We have given the details of this event in the Introduction to Surah Al-Anfal.
Then, when the Holy Prophet arrived in Madinah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Ansaar that Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) took his seat to deliver the Sermon, Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say "O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honored you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him. " (Ibn Hisham, val. III, p. 111). On the other, his hypocrisy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims.
Once when the Holy Prophet was passing on the way Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Holy Prophet complained of it to Hadrat Sa'd bin Ubadah; he said: "O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom. " (Ibn Hisham vol: II, pp. 237-238). After the Battle of Badr when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) invaded the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuqaa` on their breaking the agreement and unprovoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Holy Prophet by his armor, said: "These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients. " (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, pp. 51-52).

On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Madinah with 3, 000 troops and the Holy Prophet had marched out with only 1, 000 men to resist them. Of these 1, 000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Holy Prophet was left with only 700 men to meet 3, 000 troops of the enemy in the field.

After this incident the common Muslims of Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his those Companions also were found who were his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uhud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Holy Prophet's Sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying "Sit down you are not worthy to say such things. " That was the first occasion in Madinah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door of the Mosque some of the Ansaar said to him, "What are you doing? Go back and ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to pray for your forgiveness. " He retorted "I do not, want him to pray for my forgiveness. " (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111).

Then in A. H. 4 the Battle of Bani an-Nadir took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his devoted Companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: "Stand firm we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you. " The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Surah Al-Hashr: 11-17 above.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Madinah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Holy Prophet continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these people too neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong hand but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Surah Al-Hashr: 12-14. Therefore; they thought their well being lay only in posing as Muslims. They came to the mosque, offered the prayers gave away the zakat, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Ansaar, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they

were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Ansaar brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled Abdullah bin Ubayy and like minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in his campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great mischiefs which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslim; had received through the pure teaching of the Quran and the companionship of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) both mischiefs were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Surah An-Noor above, and the other which has been mentioned in this Surah.

This incident has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Tabari, Ibn Marduyah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and Muhammad bin Ishaq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabuk. But the authorities on the battles fought by the Holy Prophet and history are agreed that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq. The following seems to he the real story when all the traditions are read together.

When after crushing down the power of Bani al-Mustaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al Muraisi. Suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well; One of them was Jehjah bin Masud Ghifari, a servant of Hadrat Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinan bin Wabar al-Juhani, whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjah kicked Sinan, which the Ansaar, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinan called out the men of Ansaar and Jehjah the Emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some Emigrants also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansaar and the Muhajirin themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) emerged and said : "what is this call of paganism? What have you to do with such a call? Leave it: it is a dirty thing. " Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute; Sinan pardoned Jehjah and peace was restored.

After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him, "Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you have become a helper of these paupers against us. Ibn Ubayy was already enraged: These words made him burst out, thus: "This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our

rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the Companions of Muhammad) as the ancient saying 'Feed your dog to fatten it and it will devour you. ' If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones. "
(continued. . .)
(continuing. . . 1) : Historical Background. . . . . .
Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Ansaar chiefs went to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and told him the whole story. The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard. The Holy Prophet said, "Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you. might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this. " But Zaid was sure and firm. He said, "No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that. " Thereupon the Holy Prophet called Ibn Ubayy, and he came and swore that he had not said any such thing. The people of the Ansaar also said "Sir, a boy says this : he might have been mistaken in what he heard Ibn Ubayy is a venerable old man and our chief. Do not believe what a boy says against him. " The elderly people of the tribe reproved Zaid also, who became depressed and held his peace. But the Holy Prophet knew Zaid as well as Abdullah bin Ubayy. Therefore, he fully understood what had actually happened.
When Hadrat Umar came to know of this, he came to the Holy Prophet and said: "Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword. Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell Mu`aadh bin Jabal, or Abbad bin Bishr, or Sad bin Mu'adh, or Muhammad bin Maslamah from among the Ansaar, to go and kill him. "But the Holy Prophet said: "No, the people will say Muhammad kills his own Companions. " After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time when the Holy Prophet was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraisi. On the way, Hadrat Usaid bin Hudair, an Ansaar chief, met the Holy Prophet, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, today you ordered the people to set off at a time which was disagreeable for traveling, a thing you have never done before. "The Holy Prophet replied: "Have you. not heard of what your friend said? " When he asked who he meant, the Holy Prophet replied: Abdullah bin Ubayy. He asked what he had said. The Holy Prophet answered: "He has asserted that when he returns to Madinah the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones. He answered : "By God, O Messenger of Allah, you are the honorable one and he is the mean one; you will drive him out whenever you want to. "
By and by the news spread among the Ansaar soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted : "You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the zakat on my property, and I paid

the zakat too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muhammad. "This further enraged the believing Ansaar and everyone' started reproaching and cursing him roughly. When the caravan was about to enter Madinah, Abdullah, the son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: "You had said that when you reached Madinah, the honorable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honorable you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Madinah until the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits you to enter. " At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: "O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Madinah. " The people conveyed this news to the Holy Prophet, and he said : "Tell Abdullah to let his father come home. "Abdullah said, "If this is the Holy Prophet's order, then you may enter. "Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to Hadrat Umar: "Now what do you think, Umar? Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately. "Hadrat Umar replied "By God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than what I said. "' These were the circumstances under which this Surah was sent down most probably after the Holy Prophet's return to Madinah.

64. Tagaabun:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence Dhalika yaum-ut taghaabun of verse 9, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word at taghaahun has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Muqatil and Kalbi say that it was partly revealed at Makkah and partly at Madinah. Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas and Ata bin Yasar say that vv. 1-13 were revealed at Makkah and vv. 14-18 at Madinah. But the majority of commentators regard the whole of the surah as a Madinan Revelation. Although there is no internal evidence to help determine its exact period of revelation, yet a study of its subject matter shows that it might probably have been sent down at an early stage at Madinah. That is why it partly resembles the Makkah surahs and partly the Madinan Surahs.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this surah is invitation to the Faith and obedience (to Allah) and the teaching of good morals. The sequence followed is that the first four verses are addressed to all men; verses 5-10 to those men, who do not believe in the invitation of the Qur'an; and verses 11-18 to those who accept and believe in this invitation. In the verses addressed to all men, they have been made aware in a few brief sentences of the four fundamental truths:

First, that the universe in which they live is not Godless, but its Creator, Master and Ruler is an All Powerful God, and everything in it testifies to His being most Perfect and absolutely faultless.

Second, that the universe is not without purpose and wisdom, but its Creator has created it with truth no one should be under the delusion that it is a mock show, which began without a purpose and will come to an end without a purpose.
Third, that the excellent form that God has created you with and the choice that He has given you to choose between belief and unbelief is not a useless and meaningless activity so that it may be of no consequence whether you choose belief or unbelief. In fact, God is watching as to how you exercise your choice.
Fourth, that you have not been created irresponsible and un-answerable. You have to return ultimately to your Creator, and have to meet the Being who is aware of everything in the universe, from Whom nothing is hidden, to Whom even the innermost thoughts of the minds are known.
After stating these four fundamental truths about the Universe and Man, the address turns to the people who adopted the way of unbelief, and their attention is drawn to a phenomenon which has persisted throughout human history, namely that nation after nation has arisen and ultimately gone to its doom. Man by his intellect and reason has been explaining this phenomenon in a thousand ways, but Allah tells the real truth and declares that the fundamental causes of the destruction of the nations were only two
First, that they refused to believe in the Messengers whom He sent for their guidance, with the result that Allah too left them to themselves, and they invented their own philosophies of life and went on groping their way from one error to another.
Second, that they also, rejected the doctrine of Hereafter, and thought this worldly life to be an end in itself, and that there was no life hereafter when they would have to render an account of their deeds before God. This corrupted their whole attitude towards life, and their impure morals and character so polluted the world that eventually the scourge of God itself had to descend and eliminate them from the scene.
After stating these two instructive truths of human history, the deniers of the message of Truth have been admonished to wake up and believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Light of Guidance that Allah has sent in the form of the Qur'an if they want to avoid the fate met by the former peoples. Besides, they have been warned that the Day shall eventually come when all the former and the latter generations will be collected at one place and the fraud and embezzlement committed by each will be exposed before all mankind. Then the fate of each man will be decided finally on the basis as to who had adopted the path of the Faith and righteous ness and who had followed the way of disbelief and denial of the Truth. The first group shall deserve eternal Paradise and the second shall be doomed to everlasting Hell. Then, addressing those who adopt the way of the Faith, a few important instructions have been given:
First, that whatever affliction befalls a person in the world, it befalls him by Allah's leave. Whoever in this state of affliction remains steadfast to the Faith, Allah blesses his heart with guidance; otherwise although the affliction of the one who in confusion or bewilderment turns away from the path of the Faith, cannot be averted except by Allah's leave, yet he becomes involved in another, the greatest affliction of all, namely that his heart is deprived of the guidance of Allah.

Secondly, that the believer is not required to affirm the faith with the tongue only, but after the affirmation of the Faith he should practically obey Allah and His Messenger. If he turns away from obedience he would himself be responsible for his loss, for the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) has become absolved from the responsibility after having delivered the message of Truth.
Thirdly, that the believer should place his trust in Allah alone and not in his own power or some other power of the world.
Fourthly, that the worldly goods and children are a great trial and temptation for the believer, for it is their love which generally distracts man from the path of faith and obedience. Therefore, the believers have to beware some of their children, and wives lest they become robbers for them on the Way of God directly or indirectly; and they should spend their wealth for the sake of God so that their self remains safe against the temptations of Satan.
Fifthly, that every man is responsible only to the extent of his power and ability. Allah does not demand that man should exert himself beyond his power and ability. However, the believer should try his best to live in fear of God as far as possible, and should see that he does not transgress the bounds set by Allah in his speech, conduct and dealings through his own negligence.

65. Talaaq:

Name
At-Talaq is not only the name of this Surah but also the title of its subject matter, for it contains commandments about Talaq (divorce) itself.
Period of Revelation
Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud has Pointed out, and the internal evidence of the subject matter of the Surah confirms the same, that it must have been sent down after those verses of surah Al-Baqarah in which commandments concerning divorce were given for the first time. Although it is difficult to determine precisely what is its exact date of revelation, yet the traditions in any case indicate that when the people started making errors in understanding the commandments of Surah Al-Baqarah, and practically also they began to commit mistakes, Allah sent down these instructions for their correction.
Theme and Subject Matter
In order to understand the commandments of this Surah, it would be useful to refresh one's memory about the instructions which have been given in the Qur'an concerning divorce and the waiting period (Iddat) above.
"Divorce may be pronounced twice; then the wife may either be kept back in fairness or allowed to separate in fairness. " (Al Baqarah 229)
"And the divorced women (after the pronouncement of the divorce) must wait for three monthly courses. . . and their husbands are fully entitled to take them back (as their wives) during this waiting period, if they desire reconciliation. " (Al Baqarah 228)
"Then, if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain lawful for him after this divorce, unless she marries another husband. . . " (Al-Baqarah : 230)

"When you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, they do not have to fulfill a waiting period, the completion of which you may demand of them. " (Al-Ahzab : 49)
"And if those of you who die, leave wives behind, the women should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days. " (Al-Baqarah 234)
The rules prescribed in these verses were as follows: (1) A man can pronounce at the most three divorces on his wife.
(2) In case the husband has pronounced one or two divorces he is entitled to keep the woman back as wife within the waiting period and if after the expiry of the waiting period the two desire to re-marry, they can re-marry there is no condition of legalization (tahlil). But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, he forfeits his right to keep her as his wife within the waiting. period, and they cannot re-marry unless the woman remarries another husband and he subsequently divorces her of his own free will.
(3) The waiting period of the woman, who menstruates and marriage with whom has been consummated, is that she should pass three monthly courses. The waiting period in case of one or two divorces is that the woman is still the legal wife of the husband and he can keep her back as his wife within the waiting period. But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, this waiting period cannot be taken advantage of for the purpose of reconciliation, but it is only meant to restrain the woman from re-marrying another person before it comes to an end.
(4) There is no waiting. period for the woman, marriage with whom has not been consummated, and who is divorced even before she is touched. She can re-marry, if she likes, immediately after the divorce.
(5) The waiting period of the woman whose husband dies, is four months and ten days.
Here, one should understand well that Surah At-Talaq was not sent down to annul any of these rules or amend it, but it was sent down for two purposes; First, that the man who has been given the right to pronounce divorce should be taught such judicious methods of using this right as do not lead to separation, as far as possible however, if separation does take place, it should only be in case all possibilities of mutual reconciliation have been exhausted. For in the Divine Law provision for divorce has been made only as an unavoidable necessity; otherwise Allah does not approve that the marriage relationship that has been established between a man and a woman should ever break. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has said "Allah has not made lawful anything more hateful in His sight than divorce. " (Abu Daud). And: "Of all the things permitted by the Law, the most hateful in the sight of Allah is the divorce, (Abu Daud)
The second object was to complement this section of the family law of Islam by supplying answers to the questions that had remained after the revelation of the commandments in Surah Al-Baqarah. So, answers have been supplied to the following questions: What would be the waiting period of the women, marriage with whom has been consummated and who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, in case they are divorced? What would be the waiting period of the

woman, who is pregnant, or the woman whose husband dies, if she is divorced? And what arrangements would be made for the maintenance and lodging of the different categories of divorced women, and for the fosterage of the child whose parents have separated on account of a divorce?

66. Tahreem:

Name

The Surah derived its name from the words lima tuharrimu of the very first verse. This too is not a title of its subject matter, but the name implies that it is the Surah in which the incident of tahrim (prohibition, forbiddance) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

In connection with the incident of tahrim referred to in this Surah, the traditions of the Hadith mention two ladies who were among the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at that time Hadrat Safiyyah and Hadrat Mariyah Qibtiyyah. The former (i. e. Haurat Safiyyah) was taken to wife by the Holy Prophet after the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, as has been unanimously reported, in A. H. 7. The other lady, Hadrat Mariyah, had been presented to the Holy Prophet by Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, in A. H. 7 and she had borne him his son, Ibrahim, in Dhil-Hijjah, A. H. 8. These historical events almost precisely determine that this Surah was sent down some time during AH 7 or A. H 8.

Theme and Topics

This is a very important Surah in which light has been thrown on some questions of grave significance with reference to some incidents concerning the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First, that the powers to prescribe the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the forbidden, are entirely and absolutely in the hand of Allah and nothing has been delegated even to the Prophet of Allah himself, not to speak of any other man. The Prophet as such can declare something lawful or unlawful only if he receives an inspiration from Allah to do so whether that inspiration is embodied in the Qur'an, or imparted to, him secretly. However, even the Prophet is not authorized to declare anything made permissible by Allah unlawful by himself, much less to say of another man.

Second, that in any society the position of a Prophet is very delicate. A minor incident experienced by an ordinary man in his life may not be of any consequence, but it assumes the status of law when experienced by a Prophet. That is why the lives of the Prophets have been kept under close supervision by Allah so that none of their acts, not even a most trivial one, may deviate from Divine Will. Whenever such an act has emanated from a Prophet, it was rectified and rectified immediately so that the Islamic law and its principles should reach the people in their absolute purity not only through the Divine Book but also through the excellent example of the Prophet, and they should include nothing which may be in disagreement with Divine Will,

Thirdly, and this automatically follows from the above mentioned point, that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was checked on a minor thing, which was not only

corrected but also recorded, it gives us complete satisfaction that whatever actions and commands and instructions we now find in the pure life of the Holy Prophet concerning which there is nothing on record in the nature of criticism or correction from Allah, they are wholly based on truth, are in complete conformity with Divine Will and we can draw guidance from them with full confidence and peace of mind.

The fourth thing that we learn from this discourse is that about the Holy Messenger himself, whose reverence and respect Allah Himself has enjoined as a necessary part of the Faith of His servants, it has been stated in this Surah that once during his sacred life he made a thing declared lawful by Allah unlawful for himself only to please his wives; then Allah has severely reproved for their errors those very wives of the Holy Prophet, whom He Himself has declared as mothers of the faithful and worthy of the highest esteem and honor by them.

Then, this criticism of the Prophet and the administration of the warning to the wives also has not been made secretly but included in the Book, which the entire ummah has to read and recite for ever. Obviously, neither the intention of making mention of it in the Book of Allah was, nor it could be, that Allah wanted to degrade His Messenger and the mothers of the faithful in the eyes of the believers; and this also is obvious that no Muslim has lost respect for them, in his heart after reading this Surah of the Qur'an.

Now, there cannot be any other reason of mentioning this thing in the Qur'an than that Allah wants to acquaint the believers with the correct manner of reverence for their great personalities. The Prophet is a Prophet, not God, that he may commit no error. Respect of the Prophet has not been enjoined because he is infallible, but because he is a perfect representative of Divine Will, and Allah has not permitted any of his errors to pass by unnoticed. This gives us the satisfaction that the noble pattern of life left by the Prophet wholly and fully represents the will of Allah. Likewise, the Companions of the holy wives of the Prophet, were human, not angels or supermen. They could commit mistakes. Whatever ranks they achieved became possible only because the guidance given by Allah and the training imparted by Allah's Messenger had molded them into the finest models. Whatever esteem and reverence they deserve is on this very basis and not on the presumption that they were infallible.

For this reason, whenever in the sacred lifetime of the Prophet (upon him be peace) the Companions or holy wives happened to commit an error due to human weakness, they were checked. Some of their errors were corrected by the Holy Prophet, as has been mentioned at many places in the Hadith; some other errors were mentioned in the Qur'an and Allah Himself corrected them so that the Muslims might not form any exaggerated notion of the respect and reverence of their elders and great men, which might raise them from humanity to the position of gods and goddesses. If one studies the Quran carefully, one will see instances of this one after the other. In Surah Al-Imran, in connection with the Battle of Uhud, the Companions have been addressed and told:

"Allah did fulfill His promise (of help) to you : in the initial stage of the battle, it was you who were killing them by Allah's leave until you lost heart and disputed about your

duty and disobeyed your leader, when Allah showed you what (the spoils) you coveted for there were among you sortie who hankered after the life of this world, and others: who cherished the life after death. Then Allah caused your retreat before the disbelievers in order to test you, but the fact is that even then Allah pardoned you, for Allah is very gracious to the believers. " (v. 152).

In surah An-Nur, in connection with the Slander against Hadrat Aisha, the Companions were told, "When you heard of it, why did not the believing men and the believing women have a good opinion of themselves, and why did they not say: this is a manifest slander?. . . . . . Were it not for Allah's grace and mercy towards you in this world and in the Hereafter, a painful scourge would have visited you because of the slander. (Just consider) when you passed this lie on from one tongue to the other and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You took it as a trifling matter whereas it was a grave offense in the sight of Allah. Why did you not, as soon as you heard of it, say 'It is not proper for us to utter such a thing? Glory be to Allah! This is a great slander'. "Allah admonishes you that in future you should never repeat anything like this, if you are true believers. " (vv. 12-17).

In surah Al-Ahzab, the holy wives have been addressed thus: "O Prophet, say to your wives If you seek the world and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you, who do good. " (vv. 28-29).

In Surah Jumu`ah about the Companions it was said: "And when they saw some merchandise and amusement they broke off to it and left you (O Prophet) standing (in the course of the Sermon). Say to them : that which is with Allah is far better than amusement and merchandise, and Allah is the best of all providers. " (v. 11).

In Surah Al-Mumtahinah, Hadrat Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah, a Companion who had fought at Badr, was severely taken to task because he had sent secret information to the disbelieving Quraish about the Holy Prophet's invasion before the conquest of Makkah.

All these instances are found in the Qur'an itself, in the same Qur'an in which Allah Himself has paid tribute to the Companions and the holy wives for their great merits, and granted them the certificate of His good pleasure, saying: "Allah became well pleased with them and they with Allah. " It was this same moderate and balanced teaching of the reverence and esteem of the great men, which saved the Muslims from falling into the pit of man worship in which the Jews and the Christians fell, and it is a result of the same that in the books that the eminent followers of the sunnah have compiled on the subjects of the Hadith, Commentary of the Qur'an and History, not only have the excellence and great merits of the Companions and holy wives and other illustrious men been mentioned, but also no hesitance has been shown in mentioning the incidents relating to their weaknesses, errors and mistakes, whereas those scholars were more appreciative of the merits and excellence of the great men and understood the bounds and limits of reverence better than those who claim to be the upholders of reverence for the elders today.

The fifth thing that has been explicitly mentioned in this Surah is that Allah's Religion is absolutely fair and just. It has for every person just that of which he becomes worthy on the basis of his faith and works. No relationship or connection even with the most righteous person can be beneficial for him in any way and no relationship or connection with the most evil and wicked person can be harmful for him in any way. In this connection three kinds of women have been cited as examples before the holy wives in particular. One example is of the wives of the Prophets Noah and Lot, who, if they had believed and cooperated with their illustrious husbands, would have occupied the same rank and position in the Muslim community. which is enjoyed by the wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). But since they were disbelievers, their being the wives of the Prophets did not help them and they fell into Hell. The second example is of the wife of Pharaoh, who in spite of being the wife of a staunch enemy of God believed and chose a path of action separate from that followed by the Pharaoh's people, and her being the wife of a staunch disbeliever did not cause her any harm, and Allah made her worthy of Paradise. The third example is of Hadrat Maryam (Mary) (peace be upon her), who attained to the high rank because she submitted to the severe test to which Allah had decided to put her. Apart from Mary no other chaste and righteous girl in the world ever has been put to such a hard test that in spite of being unmarried, she might have been made pregnant miraculously by Allah's command and informed what service her Lord willed to take from her. When Hadrat Maryam accepted this decision, and agreed to bear, like a true believer, everything that she inevitably had to bear in order to fulfill Allah's will, then did Allah exalt her to the noble rank of Sayyidatu an-nisa' fil-Jannah: "Leader of the women in Paradise" (Musnad Ahmad).

Besides, another truth that we learn from this Surah is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive from Allah only that knowledge which is included and recorded in the Qur'an, but he was given information about other things also by revelation, which has not been recorded in the Qur'an. Its clear proof is verse 3 of this Surah. In it we are told that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) confided a secret to one of his wives, and she told it to another. Allah informed the Holy Prophet of this secret. Then, when the Holy Prophet warned his particular wife on the mistake of disclosure and she said: "Who has informed you of this mistake of mine? " he replied: "I have been informed of it by Him Who knows everything and is All Aware. " Now, the question is where in the Qur'an is the verse in which Allah has said "O Prophet, the secret that you had confided to one of your wives, has been disclosed by her to another person, or to so and so? If there is no such verse in the Qur'an, and obviously there is none, this is an express proof of the fact that revelation descended on the Holy Prophet besides the Qur'an as well. This refutes the claim of the deniers of Hadith, who allege that nothing was sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) apart from the Qur'an.

67. Mulk:

Name

The Surah takes its name al-Mulk from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Surah was revealed, but the subject matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this surah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest surahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophet's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that the universe in which he lives is a most well organized and fortified Kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, how ever hard he may try to probe. This Kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and All the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In vv. 6-II, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say "Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behavior accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you. "

In vv. 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: "He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a rich reward in the Hereafter. "

In vv. 15-23, making allusions, one after the other to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said: "Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah; otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is

sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources: if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it; and if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men; that is why you do not see the right way. "

In vv. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you "This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened. "

In vv. 28-29 replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions. They cursed the Holy Prophet and prayed for his and the believers destruction. To this it has been said: "Whether those who call you to the right way are destroyed, or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God? You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided in actual truth.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it "If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life giving water? "

68. Qalam:

Name

This Surah is called Nun as well as Qalam, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest surahs to be revealed at Makkah, but its subject matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had grown very harsh and tyrannical.

Theme and Subject Matter

It consists of three themes: Replies to the opponents objections, administration of warning and admonition to them, and exhortation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to patience and constancy.

At the outset, the Holy Prophet has been addressed, to the effect: "The disbelievers call you a madman whereas the Book that you are presenting and the sublime conduct that you practice, are by themselves sufficient to refute their false accusations. Soon they will see as to who was mad and who was sane; therefore, do not at all yield to the din of

opposition being kicked up against you, for all this is actually meant to cow you and make you resort to a compromise with them. "
Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah fully well recognized, has been presented, without naming him: At that time, the Holy Prophet's pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.
Then, in vv. 17-33, the parable of the owners of a garden has been presented, who after having been blessed by Allah turned ungrateful to Him, and did not heed the admonition of the best man among them when it was given them. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessing and they realized this, when all they had lay devastated. With this parable the people of Makkah have been warned to the effect: "With the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Prophethood, you, O people of Makkah, too, have been put to a test similar to the one to which the owners of the garden had been put. If you do not listen to him, you too will be afflicted with a punishment in the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater. "
Then, in vv. 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). A summary of what has been said in this regard, is this: Well being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Qur'an they cannot escape Divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger, for he is a preacher without any vested interest: he is not asking any reward of them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they know with certainty that he is not a true Messenger, nor that what he says is false.
In conclusion, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to the effect: "Bear with patience the hardships that you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith till Allah's judgment arrives, and avoid the impatience which caused suffering and affliction to the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him). "

69. Haaqqah:

Name
The Surah takes its name from the word al-Haaqqah with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest surahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Hadrat Umar, saying: "Before embracing Islam one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Holy Prophet, but he had entered the Masjid al-Haraam before me. When I arrived I found that he was reciting surah Al-Haaqqah in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Qur'an I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraish alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: "This is the Word of an honorable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet. " I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon be recited the words: "Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart. " This tradition of Hadrat Umar shows that this surah had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islam, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favor of Islam by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender? and submit to the Faith completely. (For details, see introduction to surah Maryam and Introduction to surah Al-Waqi`ah).

Theme and Subject Matter

The first section (vv. 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (vv. 38-52) about the Qur'an's being a revelation from Allah and the Holy Prophet's being a true Messenger of Allah. The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in vv. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In vv. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In vv. 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (vv. 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: "You think this Qur'an is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent dawn by Allah, which is being presented by the noble Messengers. The Messenger by himself had no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges

something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the Truth absolute and pure: and those who give it a lie, will have ultimately to regret and repent.

70. Ma`aarij:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word dhil Ma`aarij in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter bears evidence that this Surah too was sent down in conditions closely resembling those under which Surah Al Haaqqah was sent down.

Theme and Subject Matter

It admonishes and gives warning to the disbelievers who made fun of the news about Resurrection and the Hereafter, and Hell and Heaven, and challenged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to cause Resurrection with which he threatened them to take place if what he said was true and they had become worthy of the punishment in Hell by denying it. The whole Surah is meant to answer this denial.

The Surah opens with words to the effect: "A demander has demanded a torment, the torment which must befall the deniers; and when it takes place, there will be none to prevent it, but it will take place at its own appointed time. Allah has His own way of doing things, but He is not unjust. Therefore, have patience, O Prophet, at what they say. They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand. "

Then it is said: "Resurrection, which they desire to be hastened out of jest and fun, is terrible, and when it comes, it will cause great distress to the culprits. At that time they will even be prepared to give away their wives and children and their nearest kinsfolk in ransom to escape the punishment, but they will not be able to escape it.

Then the people have been warned to the effect; "On that Day the destinies of men will be decided strictly on the basis of their belief and their conduct. Those who turn away from the Truth in the world and amass wealth and withhold it from the needy, will be doomed to Hell; and those who fear the punishment of God here, believe in the Hereafter, keep up the Prayer, discharge the rights of the needy out of their wealth, strictly avoid immoral and wicked deeds, practice honesty in all their dealings, fulfill their pledges and trust and bear true witness, will have a place of honor in Paradise"

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side as soon as they saw him, in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: "If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will be better than you", and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, so as to say: "Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting; leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and humiliation of the Resurrection; they will themselves see their evil end. "'

71. Nooh:

Name

"Nooh" is the name of this Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it, from beginning to the end, the story of the Prophet Noah has been related.

Period of Revelation

This also is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah, but the internal evidence of its subject matter shows that it was sent down in the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet's message of Islam by the disbelievers of Makkah had grown very strong and active.

Theme and Subject

In this surah the story of the Prophet Noah has not been related only for the sake of story telling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: "You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) the same attitude as the people of the Prophet Noah had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end. " This had not been said in so many words anywhere in the Surah, but in the background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

Vv. 2-4 briefly explain how he began his mission and what he preached. Then after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages the report that he made to his Lord has been given in vv. 5-20. In it he states how he had been trying to bring his people to the right path and how his people had stubbornly opposed him.

After this, the Prophet Noah's final submission has been recorded in vv. 21-24, in which he prays to his Lord, saying: "These people have rejected my invitation: they are blindly following their chiefs, who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance. " This was not an expression of impatience by the Prophet Noah, but when after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries be became utterly disappointed with his people, he formed the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their coming to the right path. His this opinion fully conformed to Allah's own decision. Thus, in the next verse (25), it has been said: "The torment of Allah descended on those people because of their misdeeds. "

In the concluding verse, the Prophet Noah's supplication that he made to his Lord, right at the time the torment descended, has been recorded. In it he prays for his own and for all the believers' forgiveness, and makes a submission to Allah to the effect: "Do not leave any of the disbelievers alive on the earth, for they have become utterly devoid of every good: they will not beget any but disbelieving and wicked descendants. "

While studying this Surah one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story which have been given in the Qur'an above. For this see Al-A`raaf: 59-64 Yunus: 71, 73, Hud: 25-49, Al-Mu'minun: 23-31, Ash-Shu`araa': 105-122, Al-Ankabut: 14, 15, As-Saaffaat: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-16.

72. Jinn:

Name

"Al-Jinn" is the name of this Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it the event of the Jinn's hearing the Qur'an and returning to their people to preach Islam to them, has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was going to Visit the Fair of Ukaz with some of his Companions, On the way be led the Fajr Prayer at Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Qur'an being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Surah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Holy Prophet's well known journey to Taif, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Qur'an during the journey to Taif has been related in Al-Ahqaf 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Qur'an on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, vv. 2-7 of this surah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Qur'an on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Taif none accompanied the Holy Prophet except Hadrat Zaid bin Harithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn Abbas says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was accompanied by some of his Companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Qur'an when the Holy Prophet had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Taif to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn Abbas, the event of the jinn's hearing the Qur'an occurred when the Holy Prophet was going to Ukaz from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Surah Al-Ahqaf and Surah Al Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Surah Al-Ahqaf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Taif in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn Abbas, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Holy Prophet had gone to the Fair of Ukaz along with some of his Companions. However, a little consideration of vv 8-10 of this surah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Divine Mission the jinn used to have one or another opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the

unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) must have formed the opinion that that was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Surah one must clearly know what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible mental confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truths about the universe and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive, does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Qur'an either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Qur'an about the jinn, Iblis and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation, which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Qur'an secretly. But the statements of the Qur'an in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatever.

The Qur'an frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations. For this, see Al A`raaf: 38, Hind : 119, Ha Mim As-Sajdah: 25, 29, Ahqaf: 18, Adh-Dhariyat: 56, and the entire surah Ar-Rahman, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Surah Al-A`raaf: 12, Al Hijr : 26-27 and Ar-Rahman : 14-19, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Surah Al Hijr: 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblis, which has been told at seven different places in the Qur'an, and at every place it confirms that Iblis was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in surah Al-Kahf: 50, it has been stated that Iblis belonged to the jinn.

In surah Al-A`raaf: 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.
In surah Al-Hijr: 16-18, surah As-Saaffaat: 6-10 and surah Al-Mulk: 5, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit; if they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so, and if they try to eavesdrop they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen, or have access to Divine secrets, has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Saba': 14.
Al-Baqarah: 30-34 and Al-Kahf: 50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although the jinn also have been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in An-Naml 39, yet the animals likewise have been given some powers greater than man, but these are no argument that the animals are superior to man.
The Qur'an also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Surahs Al-Ahqaf and Al-Jinn.
At scores of places in the Qur'an, it has also been stated that Iblis at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see An-Nisaa' 117-120, Al-A`raaf: 11-17, Ibrahim: 22, Al-Hijr: 30-42, An-Nahl 98-100, Bani Israil 61-65.
The Qur'an also tells us that in the pre Islamic ignorance the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshipped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Al-An`am: 100, Saba'' : 40-41, Assaaffaat: 158.
From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a concealed creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshipped them, but the Qur'an has explained the whole truth about them, which shows what they are and what they are not.
Theme and Topics
In this Surah in vv. 1-15, it has been told what was the impact of the Qur'an on the company of the jinn when they heard it and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and or mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Qur'an.

After this, in vv 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: "If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment. " Then, in vv. 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if to say: When the Messenger of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people. " Then, in vv. 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case. " In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger receives only that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him. This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatever.

73. Muzammil:

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word al-muzzammil occurring in the very first verse. This is only a name and not a title of its subject matter.

Period of Revelation

The two sections of this Surah were revealed in two separate periods. The first section (vv. 1-19) is unanimously a Makki Revelation, and this is supported both by its subject matter and by the traditions of the Hadith. As for the question, in which specific period of the life at Makkah it was revealed, it is not answered by the tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject matter of this section helps to determine the period of its revelation.

First, in it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been instructed to the effect: "Arise during the night and worship Allah so that you may develop the capability to shoulder the heavy burden of Prophethood and to discharge its responsibilities. " This shows that this Command must have been given in the earliest period of the Prophethood' when training was being imparted to the Holy prophet by Allah for this office.

Secondly, a Command has been given in it that the Qur'an be recited in, the Tahajjud Prayer for half the night, or there-about. This Command by itself points out that by that time at least so much of the Qur'an had been revealed as could be recited for that long.

Thirdly, in this section the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to have patience at the excesses being committed by his opponents, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened with the torment. This shows that this section was

revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had openly started preaching Islam and the opposition to him at Makkah had grown active and strong.
About the second section (v. 20) although many of the commentators have expressed the opinion that this too was sent down at Makkah, yet some other commentators regard it as a Madani Revelation, and this same opinion is confirmed by the subject matter of this section. For it mentions fighting in the way of Allah, and obviously, there could be no question of it at Makkah; it also contains the Command to pay the obligatory zakat, and it is fully confirmed that the zakat at a specific rate and with an exemption limit (nisaab) was enjoined at Madinah.
Theme and Subject Matter
In the first seven verses the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to the effect: "Prepare yourself to shoulder the responsibilities of the great Mission that has been entrusted to you; its practical form is that you should rise during the hours of night and stand up in Prayer for half the night, or for a little more or less of it. "
In vv. 8-14, he has been exhorted to the effect: "Devote yourself exclusively to that God Who is the Owner of the whole universe. entrust all your affairs to Him with full satisfaction of the heart. Bear with patience whatever your opponents may utter against you. Do not be intimate with them. Leave their affair to God: He Himself will deal with them. "
Then, in vv. 15-19, those of the people of Makkah, who were opposing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been warned, so as to say: "We have sent a Messenger to you just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. Just consider what fate the Pharaoh met when he did not accept the invitation of the Messenger of Allah. Supposing that you are not punished by a torment in this world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment for disbelief on the Day of Resurrection. "
This is the subject matter of the first section. The second section, according to a tradition from Hadrat Sa`eed bin Jubair, was sent down ten years later, and in it the initial Command given in connection with the Tahajjud Prayer, in the beginning of the first section, was curtailed. The new Command enjoined, "Offer as much of the Tahajjud Prayer as you easily can, but what the Muslims should particularly mind and attend to is the five times obligatory Prayer a day:, they should establish it regularly and punctually; they should discharge their zakat dues accurately; and they should spend their wealth with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. In conclusion, the Muslims have been exhorted, saying: "Whatever good works you do in the world, will not go waste, but they are like the provision which a traveler sends up in advance to his permanent place of residence. Whatever good you send up from the world, you will find it with Allah, and the provision thus sent up is much better than what you will have to leave behind in the world, and with Allah you will also get a much better and richer reward than what you have actually sent up before. "

74. Muddaththir:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-muddaththir in the first verse. This also is only a name, not a title of its subject matter.

Period of Revelation

The first seven verses of this Surah belong to the earliest period at Makkah. Even according to some traditions which have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. , on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, these are the very earliest verses of the Qur'an to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whoa be peace). But the Muslim Ummah almost unanimously agreed that the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq (XCVI) However, what is established by authentic traditions is that after this first Revelation, no Revelation came down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for quite some time. Then, when it was resumed, it started with theme verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir. Imam Zuhri has given the following details of it;

"Revelation to the Holy Prophet remained suspended for quite some time, and it was such a period of deep grief and distress for him that he started going early to the tops of the mountains to throw himself down from them. But whenever he stood on the edge of a peak, the Angel Gabriel would appear and tell him that he was Allah's Prophet. This would console him and restore to him full peace of mind. " (Ibn Jarir). After this Imam Zuhri relates the following tradition on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah; "The Holy Messenger of Allah describing the period of fatrat al-wahi (break in revelation) said: One day when I was passing on the way, I suddenly heard a call from heaven. I raised my head and saw that the same Angel who had visited me in the Cave of Hiraa' was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. This struck terror in my heart, and reaching home quickly, I said: 'Cover me up, cover me up'. So the people of the house covered me up with a quilt (or blanket). At that time Allah sent down the Revelation: Yaa ayyuhal-Muddaththiru. . . From then on revelation became intense and continuous. " (Bukhari, Muslim Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

The rest of the Surah (vv. 8-56) was revealed when the first Hajj season came after public preaching of Islam had begun in Makkah. This has been fully well described in the Surah by Ibn Hisham and we shall cite it below.

Theme and Subject. Matter

As has been explained above, the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq, in which it had been Said: "Read (O Prophet), in the name of your Lord, Who created: created man from a clot of congealed blood. Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen, taught man what he did not know. "

This was the first experience of Revelation met with suddenly by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). in this message it was not told what great mission he had been entrusted with and what duties he had to perk form in future. He was only initiated into it and then left alone for a time so that the great strain this experience had caused should pass away and he should mentally become prepared to receive the Revelation and perform the prophetic mission in the future. After this intermission when Revelation

Was resumed, the first seven verses of this Surah Were revealed: In these he Was for the first time commanded to arise and warn the people of the consequences of the way of life they were following and to proclaim the greatness of God in the world where others were being magnified without any right. Along with that he was given this instruction: The demand of the Unique mission that you have to perform, now is that your life should be pure in every respect and you should carry out the duty of reforming your people sincerely irrespective of any worldly gain. Then, in the last sentence, he was exhorted to endure with patience, for the sake of his Lord, all the hardships and troubles that he might have to face while performing his mission.
In the implementation of this Divine Command when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to preach Islam and recite the Qur'anic Surahs revealed successively, the people of Makkah felt alarmed, and it provoked a great storm of opposition and hostility. A few months passed in this state until the Hajj season approached.
The people of Makkah feared that if Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) started visiting the caravans of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia at their halting places and reciting the spell binding and unique Revelations of the Qur'an in their assemblies on the occasion of Hajj, his message would reach every part of Arabia and influence countless people.
Therefore, the Quraish chiefs held a conference and settled that they would start a propaganda campaign against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) among the pilgrims as soon as they arrived. After they had agreed on this, Walid bin al-Mughirah said to the assembled people: "If you said contradictory things about Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), we all would lose our trust among the people. Therefore, let us agree upon one opinion, which we should all say without dispute.
Some people said that they would call Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) a soothsayer. Walid said : No, by God, be is not a soothsayer. We have seen the soothsayers: what they murmur and what they utter has no remote resemblance with the Qur'an.
Some other people said: Then we say be is possessed. Walid said: He is not a possessed one: we have seen bad and insane people; the way one talks disjointedly and behaves foolishly in that state is known to all: who would believe that what Muhammad (upon whom be peace) presented was the incoherent speech of a madman?
The people said: Then we say he is a poet. Walid said: No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms, and what he presents conforms to no form of it.
The people said: Then he is a sorcerer. Walid said: He is no sorcerer either: we have Seen sorcerers and we also know what methods they adopt for their sorcery. This also does not apply to Muhammad.
Then he said: "Whichever of these things you said about Muhammad, it would be known to be a false accusation. By God, his speech is sweet, his root is deep and his branches are fruitful.
At this Abu Jahl urging on Walid said: Your people will never be pleased with you unless you say something about Muhammad. He said: Let me think over it awhile.

Then, after prolonged thought and consideration, he said: The nearest thing to the truth is that you tell the Arabs that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father; and from his brother, and from his wife and children, and from his family.
They all agreed on what Walid had proposed. Then, according to a scheme the men of Quraish spread among the pilgrims in the Hajj season and they warned everyone they met of the secrecy of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) and of his stirring up divisions in the families by it. " But the result was that by their this plan the Quraish chiefs themselves made the name of the Holy Messenger known throughout Arabia. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 288-289. That Walid had made this proposal on the insistence of Abu Jahl has been related by Ibn Jarir in his Tafsir on the authority of Ikrimah).
In conclusion, it has been explicitly stated: Allah does not stand in need of anybody's faith that He may fulfill his conditions. The Qur'an is an admonition that has been presented before the people openly; now whoever wills may accept it. Allah has a right that the people should fear His disobedience and He alone has the power to forgive the one who adopts piety and an attitude of God consciousness even though one may have committed many acts of disobedience in the past.

75. Qiyaamah:

Name
The Surah has been so named after the word al-Qiyaamah in the first verse. This is not only the name but also the title of this Surah, for it is devoted to Resurrection itself.
Period of Revelation
Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject matter of this Surah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be sent down at Makkah. After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told: "Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning. " Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 15, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Surah to the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet, lest he should forget its words later, was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of Revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Qur'an. First, in Surah Ta Ha the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you. " (v. 114). Then, in Surah Al-A'la, it has been said: "We shall enable you to recite:, then you shall never forget. (v. 6). Later, when the Holy Prophet became fully used to receiving the Revelation well, there

remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these, three, there is no other instance of this in the Qur'an.

Theme and Subject Matter

Most of the Surahs, from here till the end of the Qur'an, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down in the period when after the first seven verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir, revelation of the Qur'an began like a shower of rain: Thus, in the successively revealed Surahs Islam and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented so forcefully and effectively in pithy, brief sentences and the people of Makkah warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the Quraish chiefs were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as has been mentioned in the Introduction to the Surah Al-Muddaththir above.

In this Surah, addressing the deniers of the Hereafter, replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and also it has been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people's denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: "The event, the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come: all your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully well what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretenses he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds. "

76. Dahr:

Name

This Surah is called Ad-Dahr as well as Al-Insaan
after the words occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Most of the commentators, including Allaama Zamakhshari, Imam Razi, Qadi, Baidawi, Allaama Nizaam ad-Din Nisaburi, Hafiz Ibn Kathir and many others, regard it as a Makki Surah, and, according to Allaama Alusi, the same is the opinion of the majority of scholars. However, some commentators hold the view that the Surah was revealed at Madinah, and some others say that it was revealed at Makkah but vv. 8-10 of it were sent down at Madinah.

As far as the subject matter and the style of the Surah are concerned, these are very different from those of the Madani Surahs. A little study of it rather shown that it is not only a Makki Surah but it was revealed during the earliest period at Makkah, which began just after the revelation of the first seven verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir. As for vv 8-10, they are so naturally set in the theme of the Surah that if they are read in their proper context, no one can say that the theme preceding and following them had been

sent down 15 to 16 years earlier but these three verses which were revealed many years later were inserted here unnaturally.
In fact, the basis of the idea that this Surah; or some verses of it were revealed at Madinah, is a tradition which Ata has related from Ibn Abbas (may Allah bless him). He says that once Hadrat Hasan and Husain fell ill The Holy Prophet and some of his Companions visited them. They wished Hadrat Ali to make a vow to Allah for the recovery of the two children. Thereupon, Hadrat Ali, Hadrat Fatimah and Fiddah their maid servant, vowed a fast of three days if Allah restored the children to health.
The children recovered by the grace of Allah and the three of them began to fast as avowed. As there was nothing to eat in the house, Hadrat Ali borrowed three measures (saa') of barley from somebody (according to another tradition, earned through labor). When on the first day they sat down to eat after breaking the fast, a poor man came and begged for food. They gave all their food to him, drank water and retired to bed. The next day when they again sat down to eat after breaking the fast, an orphan came and begged for something. They again gave away the whole food to him, drank water and went to bed. On the third day when they were just going to eat after breaking the fast, a captive came up and begged for food likewise. Again the whole food was given away to him. On the fourth day Hadrat Ali took both the children with him and went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).
The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) seeing the weak condition of the three, returned with them to the house of Hadrat Fatimah and found her lying in a corner half dead with hunger. This moved him visibly. In the meantime the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) came and said; "Look, Allah has congratulated you on the virtues of the people of your house! "
When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he recited this whole Surah in response. (According to Ibn Mahran's tradition, he recited it from verse 5 till the end. But the tradition which Ibn Marduyah has related from Ibn Abbas only says that the verse Wa yut'imun-at ta'am. . . was sent down concerning Hadrat Ali and Hadrat Fatimah; there is no mention of this story in it). This whole story has been narrated by Ali bin Ahmad al-Wahidi in his Commentary of the Qur'an, entitled Al Basit, and probably from the same it has been taken by Zamakhshari, Razi, Nisaburi and others.
In the first place, this tradition is very weak as regards its chain of transmission. Then, from the point of view of its subject matter also, it is strange that when a poor man, or an orphan, or a captive, comes to beg for food, he is given all the food. He could be given one member's food and the five of them could share the rest of it among themselves.
Then this also is incredible that illustrious persons like Hadrat Ali and Hadrat Fatimah, who possessed perfect knowledge of Islam, should have regarded it as an act of virtue to keep the two children, who had just recovered their health and were still weak, hungry for three consecutive days.
Moreover, in respect of the captives also, it has never been a practice under the Islamic government that they should be left to beg for food for themselves. For if they were

prisoners of the government, the government itself was responsible to arrange food and clothing for them, and if they were in an individual's custody, he was made responsible to feed and clothe them. Therefore, it was not possible that in Madinah a captive should have gone about begging food from door to door.

However, overlooking the weaknesses of transmission and the probability of subject matter, even if the narrative is accepted as it goes, at the most what it shows is that when the people of the Holy Prophet's house acted righteously as they did, Gabriel came and gave him the good news that Allah had much appreciated their act of virtue, for they had acted precisely in the righteous way that Allah had commanded in these verses of Surah Ad-Dahr.

This does not necessitate that these verses too were sent down on that very occasion. The same is the case with many traditions concerning the occasion of revelation. When about a certain verse it is said that it was sent down on a particular occasion, it in fact does not mean that the verse was sent down on the very occasion the incident took place. But it means that the verse applies precisely and exactly to the incident.

Imam Suyuti in Al-Itqan has quoted this from Hafiz Ibn Taimiyyah: "When the reporters say that a verse was sent down concerning a particular incident, it sometimes implies that the same incident (or matter) occasioned its revelation, and sometimes that the verse applies to the matter although it may not have occasioned its revelation. "Further on he quotes Imam Badr ad-Din Zarkashi's view from his Al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Quran: "It is well known in respect of the Companions and their immediate successors that when one of them says that a verse was sent down concerning a particular matter, it means that the ruling contained in it applied to that matter and not that the matter itself occasioned the revelation of the verse. Thus, it only uses the ruling of the verse for the purpose of reasoning and not for stating a fact. " (Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Quran, vol. I, p. 31, Ed. 1929).

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is to inform man of his true position in the world and to tell him that if he understood his true position rightly and adopted the attitude of gratefulness, he would meet with such and such good end, and if he adopted the way of disbelief, he would meet with such and such evil ends In the longer Surahs of the Qur'an this same theme has been presented at length, but a special characteristic of the style of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah is that the subjects dealt with at length in the later period, "have been presented in a brief but highly effective way in this period in such concise, elegant sentences as may automatically be preserved in the memory of the hearers.

In this Surah, first of all man has been reminded that there was a time when he was nothing; then a humble beginning of him was made with a mixed drop of sperm and ovum of which even his mother was not aware; even she did not know that he had been conceived nor anyone else seeing the microscopic cell could say that it was a man, who in future would become the best of creation on the earth. After this, man has been warned, so as to say: "Beginning your creation in this way We have developed and

shaped you into what you are today in order to test and try you in the world. That is why, unlike other creatures, you were made intelligent and sensible and were shown both the way of gratitude and the way of ingratitude clearly so that you may show, in the interval that you have been granted here for work, whether you have emerged as a grateful servant from the test or an unbelieving, Ungrateful wretch! "
Then, just in one sentence, it has been stated decisively what will be the fate to be met with in the Hereafter by those who emerged as unbelievers from this test.
After this, in vv. 5-22 continuously, the blessings with which those who do full justice to servitude in the world, will be favored, have been mentioned in full detail. In these verses, not only have their best rewards been mentioned but they have also been told briefly what are the acts on the basis of which they would become worthy of those rewards. Another special characteristic of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah is that besides introducing in them briefly the fundamental beliefs and concepts of Islam, here and there, those moral qualities and virtuous acts have been mentioned, which are praiseworthy according to Islam, and also those evils of deed and morality of which Islam strives to cleanse human life. And these two things have not been mentioned with a view to show what good or evil result is entailed by them in the transitory life of the world, but they have been mentioned only to point out what enduring results they will produce in the eternal and everlasting life of the Hereafter, irrespective of whether an evil quality may prove useful or a good quality may prove harmful in the world.
This is the subject matter of the first section (vv. 1-22). In the second section, addressing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), three things have been stated: first, that "it is in fact We Ourself Who are revealing this Qur'an piecemeal to you, and this is intended to inform the disbelievers, not you, that the Qur'an is not being fabricated by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but it is "We Who are revealing it, and it is Our Own wisdom which requires that We should reveal it piece by piece and not all at once. "Second, the Holy Prophet has been told: "No matter how long, it may take for the decree of your Lord to be enforced and no matter what afflictions may befall you in the meantime, in any case you should continue to perform your mission of Apostleship patiently, and not to yield to the pressure tactics of any of these wicked and unbelieving people. "The third thing he has been told is: "Remember Allah day and night, perform the Prayer and spend your nights in the worship of Allah, for it is these things which sustain and strengthen those who call to Allah in the face of iniquity and disbelief. "
Then in one single sentence, the actual cause of the disbelievers wrong attitude has been stated: they have forgotten the Hereafter and are enamored of the world. In the second sentence, they have been warned to the effect: "You have not come into being by yourself: We have created you. You have not made these broad chests, and strong, sturdy hands and feet for yourselves, it is We Who made these for you; and it so lies in Our power to treat you as We please. We can distort your figures, We can destroy you and replace you by some other nation. We can cause you to die and can recreate you in whatever form we like. "

In conclusion, it has been said: This is an Admonition: whoever wills may accept it and take a path to his Lord. But man's own will and desire is not everything in the world. No one's will and desire can be fulfilled unless Allah (also) so wills. And Allah's willing is not haphazard: whatever He wills, He wills it on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. He admits into His mercy whomever He regards as worthy of His mercy on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom, and He has prepared a painful torment for those whom He finds unjust and wicked.

77. Mursalaat:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word wal-mursalaat in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter bears full evidence that it was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah. If this Surah is read together with the two Surahs preceding it, namely Al-Qiyaamah and Ad-Dahr, and the two Surahs following it, namely An-Naba and An-Nazi`aat, it becomes obvious that all these Surahs are the Revelations of the same period, and they deal with one and the same theme, which has been impressed on the people of Makkah in different ways.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter and to warn the people of the consequences which will ultimately follow the denial and the affirmation of these truths.

In the first seven verses, the system of winds has been presented as an evidence of the truth that the Resurrection which is being foretold by the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) must come to pass. The reasoning is that the power of All-Mighty Allah Who established this wonderful system on the earth, cannot be helpless in bringing about the Resurrection, and the express wisdom which underlies this system bears full evidence that the Hereafter must appear, for no act of an All-Wise Creator can be vain and purposeless, and if there was no Hereafter, it would mean that the whole of one's life was useless and absurd.

The people of Makkah repeatedly asked, "Bring about the Resurrection with which you threaten us; only then shall we believe in it. "In vv. 8-15, their demand has been answered, saying: "Resurrection is no sport or fun so that whenever a jester should ask for it, it should be brought forth immediately. It is indeed the Day of Judgment to settle the account of all mankind and of all its individuals. For it Allah has fixed a specific time it will take place at its own time, and when it takes place with all its dreads and horrors, it will confound those who are demanding it for fun today. Then their cases will be decided only on the evidence of those Messengers whom these deniers of the truth are repudiating with impunity. Then they will themselves realize how they themselves are responsible for their dooms

In vv. 16-28 arguments have been given continuously for the occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter.

In these it has been stated that man's own history, his own birth, and the structure of the earth on which he lives, bear the testimony that the coming of Resurrection and the establishment of the Hereafter are possible as well as the demand of Allah Almighty's wisdom.
History tells us that the nations which denied the Hereafter ultimately became corrupted and met with destruction. This means that the Hereafter is a truth which if denied and contradicted by a nation by its conduct and attitude, will cause it to meet the same doom, which is met by a blind man who bushes headlong into an approaching train.
And it also means that in the kingdom of the universe only physical laws are not at work but a moral law also is working in it, under which in this very world the process of retribution is operating.
But since in the present life of the world retribution is not taking place in its complete and perfect form, the moral law of the universe necessarily demands that there should come a time when it should take its full course and all those good works and evil deeds, which could not be rewarded here, or which escaped their due punishment should be fully rewarded and punished. For this it is inevitable that there should be a second life after death. If man only considers how he takes his birth in the world, his intellect, provided it is sound intellect, cannot deny that for the God Who began his creation from an insignificant sperm drop and developed him into a perfect man, it certainly possible to create the same man once again.
After death the particles of man's body do not disappear but continue to exist on the same earth on which he lived his whole life. It is from the resources and treasures of this very earth that he is made and nourished and then into the same treasures of the earth he is deposited.
The God who caused him to emerge from the treasures of the earth, in the first instance, can also cause him to re-emerge from the same treasures after he has been restored to them at death. If one only considers the powers of Allah, one cannot deny that He can do this; and if one considers the wisdom of Allah, one also cannot deny that it is certainly the very demand of His wisdom to call man to account for the right and wrong use of the powers that He has granted him on the earth; it would rather be against wisdom to let him off without rendering an account.
Then, in vv. 28-40, the fate of the deniers of the Hereafter has been depicted, and in vv. 41-45 of those who affirming faith in it in their worldly life, endeavored to improve their Hereafter, and abstained from the evils of disbelief and thought, morality and deed, conduct and character which might be helpful in man's worldly life, but are certainly ruinous for his life hereafter.
In the end, the deniers of the Hereafter and those who turn away from God-worship, have been warned as if to say: "Enjoy your short-lived worldly pleasure as you may, but your end will ultimately be disastrous. " The discourse concludes with the assertion that the one who fails to obtain guidance from Book like the Qur'an, can have no ether source in the world to afford him Guidance.

78. Naba':

Name

The Surah derived its name from the word an-Naba' in the second verse. This is not only a name but also a title of its subject matter, for Naba' implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole Surah is devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the introduction to Surah Al-Mursalaat, the theme of all the Surahs, from Al-Qiyaamah to An-Naazi`aat, closely resembles one another, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme also is the same as of Surah Al-Mursalaat, i. e. to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or dis-acknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements: (1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead; (2) that Allah had appointed him as His Messenger; (3) that this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell for ever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Providence and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity and in the Divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing, the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years life that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying deceitful person or the one who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to

bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (Tauhid) also is impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Holy Messenger of Allah and the Qur'an.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Surahs of this period, let us now have a look at the subject matter of this Surah. In it first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked: "Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you? Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed in the earth? Don't you consider your own selves how We have created you as pairs of men and women? Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours rest after every few hours labor and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world? Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements? Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you? Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat? Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens? Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the Next World? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand this that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless? Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation, in this workhouse, when he leaves the world after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgment shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in vv. 21-30; it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our Revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying an ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in vv. 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.
In conclusion, the Divine Court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the Truth in the world but were sinners; rebels of God and rejectors of the Truth will deserve no intercession at all.
The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold, shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning, "will have all his deeds placed before him: and he will exclaim regretfully: "Oh, would that I were not born in the world! " At that time, his regrets will be about the same world of which he is so enamored today!

79. Naazi`aat:

Name
It is derived from the word wan-naazi`aat with which the Surah opens.
Period of Revelation
According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, this Surah was sent down after Surah An-Naba. Its subject matter also testifies that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah.
Theme and Subject Matter
Its theme is affirmation of Resurrection and the life hereafter; It also warns of the consequences of belying the Messenger of God.
The Surah opens with oaths sworn by the angels who take the soul at deaths and those who hasten to carryout Allah's Commands, and those who conduct the affairs of the universe according to Divine Will, to assure that the Resurrection will certainly come to pass and the second life after death will certainly take place. For the angels who are employed to pluck out the soul today can also be employed to restore the soul tomorrow, and the angels who promptly execute Allah's Commands and conduct the affairs of the universe today can also upset the order of the universe tomorrow by orders of the same God and can also bring about a new order.
After this the people have been told, so as to say: "This work which you regard as absolutely impossible, is not any difficult for Allah, for which He may have to make lengthy preparations. Just a single jolt will upset this system of the world and a second

jolt will be enough to cause you to appear as living beings in the new world. At that time the same people who were wont to deny it, would be trembling with fear and seeing with awe struck eyes all that they thought was impossible.

Then, relating the story of the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh briefly, the people have been warned to the effect: "You know full well what fate the Pharaoh met in consequence of belying the Messenger and rejecting the guidance brought by him and endeavoring to defeat his mission by trickery and deceit. If you do not learn any lesson from it and do not change your ways and attitude accordingly, you also will have to meet the same fate.

Then, in vv. 27-13, arguments have been given for the Hereafter and life after death. In this regard, the deniers have been asked the question: "Is your resurrection a more difficult task or the creation of the huge Universe which spreads around you to infinite distances with myriads of its stars and planets?

Your recreation cannot be difficult for the God for Whom this was an easy task.

Thus, after presenting in a single sentence, a decisive argument for the possibility of the Hereafter, attention has been drawn to the earth and its provisions that have been arranged in it for the sustenance of man and animal and of which everything testifies that it has been created with great wisdom for fulfilling some special purpose.

Pointing to this the question has been left for the intellect of man to ponder for itself and form the opinion whether calling man to account after having delegated authority and responsibilities to a creature like him in this wise system would be more in keeping with the demands of wisdom, or that he should die after committing all sorts of misdeeds in the world and should perish and mix in the dust for ever and should never be called to account as to how he employed the authority and fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to him.

Instead of discussing this question, in vv. 34-41, it has been said: "When the Hereafter is established, men's eternal future will be determined on the criterion as to which of them rebelled against his God transgressing the bounds of service and made the material benefits and pleasures his objective of life and which of them feared standing before his Lord and refrained from fulfilling the unlawful desires of the self.

This by itself provides the right answer to the above question to every such person who considers it honestly, free from stubbornness. For the only rational, logical and moral demand of giving authority and entrusting responsibilities to man in the world is that he should be called to account on this very basis ultimately and rewarded or punished accordingly.

In conclusion, the question of the disbelievers of Makkah as to when Resurrection will take place, has been answered. They asked the Holy Prophet this question over and over again. In reply it has been said that the knowledge of the time of its occurrence rests with Allah alone. The Messenger is there only to give the warning that it will certainly come. Now whoever wishes may mend his ways, fearing its coming, and whoever wishes may behave and conduct himself as he likes, fearless of its coming. When the appointed time comes, those very people who loved the life of this world and regarded its pleasures as the only object of life, would feel that they had stayed in the world only

for an hour or so. Then they will realize how utterly they had ruined their future for ever for the sake of the short lived pleasures of the world.

80. Abasa:

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word abasa with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The commentators and traditionists are unanimous about the occasion of the revelation of this Surah. According to them, once some big chiefs of Makkah were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and he was earnestly engaged in trying to persuade them to accept Islam. At that very point, a blind man, named Ibn Umm Maktum, approached him to seek explanation of some point concerning Islam. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) disliked his interruption and ignored him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. From this historical incident the period of the revelation of this Surah can be precisely determined.

In the first place, it is confirmed that Hadrat Ibn Umm Maktum was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Hafiz Ibn Hajar and Hafiz Ibn Kathir have stated that he was one of those who had accepted Islam at a very early stage at Makkah.

Secondly, some of the traditions of the Hadith which relate this incident show that he had already accepted Islam and some others show that be was inclined to accept it and had approached the Holy Prophet in search of the truth. Hadrat Aishah states that coming to the Holy Prophet he had said: "O Messenger of Allah, guide me to the straight path. " (Tirmidhi, Haakim, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Jarir, Abu Ya'la. According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, he had asked the meaning of a verse of the Qur'an and said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, teach me the knowledge that Allah has taught you. " Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim). These statements show that he had acknowledged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace as a Messenger of Allah and the Qur'an as a Book of Allah. Contrary to this, Ibn Zaid has interpreted the words la`allahu yazzakka of verse 3 to mean: la`allahu yuslim: "maybe that he accepts Islam. " (Ibn Jarir) And Allah's own words: "What would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him? " and "The one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away", point out that by that time he had developed in himself a deep desire to learn the truth: he had come to the Holy Prophet with the belief that he was the only source of guidance and his desire would be satisfied only through him; his apparent state also reflected that if he was given instruction, he would benefit by it.

Thirdly, the names of the people who were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly at that time, have been given in different traditions. In this list we find the names of `Utbah, Shaibah, Abu Jahl, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Ubayy bin Khalaf, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam. This shows that the incident took place in the period when these chiefs were still on meeting terms with the Holy Prophet and their antagonism to Islam had not yet grown so strong as to have stopped their paying visits to him and having

dialogues with him off and on. All these arguments indicate that this is one of the very earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In view of the apparent style with which the discourse opens, one feels that in this Surah Allah has expressed His displeasure against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his treating the blind man with indifference and attending to the big chiefs exclusively. But when the whole Surah is considered objectively, one finds that the displeasure, in fact, has been expressed against the disbelieving Quraish, who because of their arrogant attitude and indifference to the truth, were rejecting with contempt the message of truth being conveyed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

Then, besides teaching him the correct method of preaching, the error of the method that he was adopting at the start of his mission has also been pointed out. His treating the blind man with neglect and disregard and devoting all his attention to the Quraish chiefs was not for the reason that he regarded the rich as noble and a poor blind man as contemptible, and, God forbid, there was some rudeness in his manner for which Allah reproved him. But, as a matter of fact, when a caller to Truth embarks on his mission of conveying his message to the people, he naturally wants the most influential people of society to accept his message so that his task becomes easy, for even if his invitation spreads among the poor and weak people, it cannot make much difference. Almost the same attitude had the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) also adopted in the beginning, his motive being only sincerity and a desire to promote his mission and not any idea of respect for the big people and hatred for the small people.

But Allah made him realize that that was not the correct method of extending invitation to Islam, but from his mission's point of view, every man, who was a seeker after truth, was important, even if he was weak, or poor, and every man, who was heedless to the truth, was unimportant, even if he occupied a high position in society. Therefore, he should openly proclaim and convey the teachings of Islam to all and sundry, but the people who were really worthy of his attention, were those who were inclined to accept the Truth, and his sublime and noble message was too high to be presented before those haughty people who in their arrogance and vanity thought that they did not stand in need of him but rather he stood in need of them.

This is the theme of vv. 1-16. From verse 17 onward the rebuke directly turns to the disbelievers, who were repudiating the invitation of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). In this, first they have been reproved for their attitude which they had adopted against their Creator, Providence and Sustainer. In the end, they have been warned of the dreadful fate that they would meet in consequence of their conduct on the Day of Resurrection.

81. Takweer:

Name

It is derived from the word kuwwirat in the first verse. Kuwwirat is passive voice from takweer in the past tense, and means "that which is folded up", thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the "folding up" has been mentioned:

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style clearly show that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

It has two themes: the Hereafter and the institution of Apostleship.

In the first six verses the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned when the sun will lose its light, the stars will scatter, the mountains will be uprooted and will disperse, the people will become heedless of their dearest possessions, the beasts of the jungle will be stupefied and will gather together, and the seas will boil up. Then in the next seven verses the second stage has been described when the souls will be reunited with the bodies, the records will be laid open, the people will be called to account for their crimes, the heavens will be unveiled, and Hell and Heaven will be brought into full view. After depicting the Hereafter thus, man has been left to ponder his own self and deeds, saying: "Then each man shall himself know what he has brought with him. "

After this the theme of Apostleship has been taken up. In this the people of Makkah have been addressed, as if to say "Whatever Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting before you, is not the bragging of a madman, nor an evil suggestion inspired by Satan, but the word of a noble, exalted and trustworthy messenger sent by God, whom Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen with his own eyes in the bright horizon of the clear sky in broad day light. Whither then are you going having turned away from this teaching? "

82. Infitaar:

Name

It is derived from the word infatarat in the first verse. Infitaar is an infinitive which means to burst or split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the splitting asunder of the sky has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

This Surah and the Surah At-Takwir closely resemble each other in their subject matter. This shows that both were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter. According to a tradition related in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, Haakim and Ibn Marduyah, on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar, the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said: "The one who wants that he should see the Resurrection Day as one would see it with one's eyes, should read Surah At-Takwir"

In this Surah first the Resurrection Day has been described and it is said that when it occurs, every person will see whatever he has done in the world. After this, man has been asked to ponder the question: "O man, what has deluded you into thinking that the

God, Who brought you into being and by Whose favor and bounty you possess the finest body, limbs and features among all creatures, is only bountiful and not just? His being bountiful and generous does not mean that you should become fearless of His justice. "Then, man has been warned, so as to say: "Do not remain involved in any misunderstanding. Your complete record is being prepared. There are trustworthy writers who are writing down whatever you do. " In conclusion, it has been forcefully stated that the Day of Resurrection will surely take place when the righteous shall enjoy every kind of bliss in Paradise and the wicked shall be punished in Hell. On that day no one shall avail anyone anything. All powers of judgment shall be with Allah.

83. Tatfeef:

Name

It is derived from the very first verse; Wayl-ul-lil mutaffifeen.

Period of Revelation

The style of the Surah and its subject matter clearly show that it was revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah, when surah after surah was being revealed to impress the doctrine of the Hereafter on the people's minds. This Surah was revealed when they had started ridiculing the Muslims and disgracing them publicly in the streets and in their assemblies, but persecution and manhandling of the Muslims had not yet started. Some commentators regard this as a Madani Surah. This misunderstanding has been caused by a tradition from Ibn Abbas according to which when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arrived in Madinah, the evil of giving short weight and measure was widespread among the people there. Then Allah sent down Wayl ul-lil mutaffifeen and the people began to give full weight and measure. But, as we have explained in the introduction to Surah Ad-Dahr, the common practice with the Companions and their successors was that when they found that a verse applied to a certain matter of life, they would say that it had been sent down concerning that particular matter. Therefore, what is proved by the tradition of Ibn Abbas is that when after his emigration to Madinah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw that the evil was widespread among the people there, he recited this Surah before them by Allah's Command and this helped them mend their ways.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah too is the Hereafter. In the first six verses the people have been taken to task for the prevalent evil practice in their commercial dealings. When they had to receive their due from others, they demanded that it be given in full, but when they had to measure or weigh for others, they would give less than what was due. Taking this one evil as an example out of countless evils prevalent in society, it has been said that it is an inevitable result of the heedlessness of the Hereafter. Unless the people realized that one day they would have to appear before God and account for each single act they performed in the world, it was not possible that they would adopt piety and righteousness in their daily affairs. Even if a person might practice honesty in some of his less important dealings in view of "honesty is the best policy", he would never

practice honesty on occasions when dishonesty would seem to be "the best policy". Man can develop true and enduring honesty only when he fears God and sincerely believes in the Hereafter, for then he would regard honesty not merely as "a policy" but as "a duty" and obligation, and his being constant in it, or otherwise, would not be dependent on its being useful or useless in the world.
Thus, after making explicit the relation between morality and the doctrine of the Hereafter in an effective and impressive way, in vv. 7-17, it has been said: The deeds of the wicked are already being recorded in the black list of the culprits, and in the Hereafter they will meet with utter ruin. Then in vv. 18-28, the best end of the virtuous has been described and it has been laid that their deeds are being recorded in the list of the exalted people, on which are appointed the angels nearest to Allah.
In conclusion, the believers have been consoled, and the disbelievers warned, as if to say: "The people who are disgracing and humiliating the believers today, are culprits who, on the Resurrection Day, will meet with a most evil end in consequence of their conduct, and these very believers will feel comforted when they see their fate. "

84. Inshiqaaq:

Name
It is derived from the word inshaqqat in the first verse. Inshaqqat is infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which mention has been made of the splitting asunder of the heavens.
Period of Revelation
This too is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah. The internal evidence of its subject matter indicates that persecution of the Muslims had not yet started; however, the message of the Qur'an was being openly repudiated at Makkah and the people were refusing to acknowledge that Resurrection would ever take place when they would have to appear before their God to render an account of their deeds.
Theme and Subject Matter
Its theme is the Resurrection and Hereafter. In the first five verses not only have the state of Resurrection been described vividly but an argument of its being true and certain also have been given. It has been stated that the heavens on that Day will split asunder, the earth will be spread out plain and smooth, and it will throw out whatever lies inside it of the dead bodies of men and evidences of their deeds so as to become completely empty from within. The argument given for it is that such will be the Command of their Lord for the heavens and the earth; since both are His creation. they cannot dare disobey His Command. For them the only right and proper course is that they should obey the Command of their Lord.
Then, in vv 6-19 it has been said that whether man Is conscious of this fact or not, he in any case is moving willy nilly to the destination when he will appear and stand before his Lord. At that time all human beings will divide into two parts: first those whose records will be given in their right hands: they will be forgiven without any severe reckoning; second those whose records will be given them behind their back. They will

wish that they should die somehow, but they will not die; instead they will be cast into Hell. They will meet with this fate because in the world they remained lost in the misunderstanding that they would never have to appear before God to render an account of their deeds, whereas their Lord was watching whatever they were doing, and there was no reason why they should escape the accountability for their deeds. Their moving gradually from the life of the world to the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter was as certain as the appearance of twilight after sunset, the coming of the night after the day, the returning of men and animals to their respective abodes at night, and the growing of the crescent into full moon.

In conclusion, the disbelievers who repudiate the Qur'an instead of bowing down to God when they hear it, have been forewarned of a grievous punishment and the good news of limitless rewards has been given to the believers and the righteous.

85. Burooj:

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word al burooj appearing in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter itself indicates that this Surah was sent down at Makkah in the period when persecution of the Muslims was at its climax and the disbelievers of Makkah were trying their utmost by tyranny and coercion to turn away the new converts from Islam.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to warn the disbelievers of the evil consequences of the persecution and tyranny that they were perpetrating on the converts to Islam, and to console the believers, so as to say: "If you remain firm and steadfast against tyranny and coercion, you will be rewarded richly for it, and Allah will certainly avenge Himself on your persecutors on your behalf"

In this connection, first of all the story of the people of the ditch (as-haab al-ukhdud) had been related, who had burnt the believers to death by casting them into pits full of fire. By means of this story the believers and the disbelievers have been taught a few lessons. First, that just as the people of the ditch became worthy of Allah's curse and punishment, so are the chiefs of Makkah also becoming worthy of it. Second, that just as the believers at that time had willingly accepted to sacrifice their lives by being burnt to death in the pits of fire instead of turning away from the faith, so also the believers now should endure every persecution but should never give up the faith. Third, that Gods acknowledging Whom displeases the disbelievers and is urged on by the believers, is Dominant and Master of the Kingdom of the earth and heavens; He is self-praiseworthy and is watching what the two groups are striving for. Therefore, it is certain that the disbelievers will not only be punished in Hell for their disbelief but, more than that, they too will suffer punishment by fire as a fit recompense for their tyranny and cruelties. Likewise, this also is certain that those, who believe and follow up their belief with good deeds, should go to Paradise and this indeed is the supreme

success. Then the disbelievers have been warned, so as to say: "God's grip is very severe. If you are proud of the strength of your hosts, you should know that the hosts of Pharaoh and Thamud were even stronger and more numerous. Therefore, you should learn a lesson from the fate they met. God's power has so encompassed you that you cannot escape His encirclement, and the Qur'an that you are bent upon belying, is unchangeable: it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, which cannot be corrupted in any way. "

86. Taariq:

Name

The Surah taken its name from the word at-taariq in its first verse.

Period of Revelation

The style of its subject matter resembles that of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah, but this surah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Qur'an and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

Theme and Subject Matter

It discuses two themes: first that man has to appear before God after death; second, that the Qur'an is a decisive Word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm drop and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, Who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Qur'an are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Qur'an, but they do not know that Allah too is devising a plan which will bring to naught all their scheming and planning. Than in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: "Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Qur'an by their scheming or the Qur'an has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it. "

87. A'la:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-A'la in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter shows that this too is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed, and the words: "We shall enable you to recite, then you shall never forget" of verse 6 also indicate that it was sent down in the period when the Holy Messenger (upon whom he Allah's peace) was not yet fully accustomed to receive Revelation and at the time Revelation came down he feared lest he should forget its words. If this verse is read along with verse 114 of Surah Ta Ha and verses 16-19 of Al-Qiyaamah and the three verses are also considered with regard to their styles and contexts, the sequence of events seems to be that first in this Surah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reassured to the effect: "Do not at all worry: We shall enable you to recite this Word, then you shall not forget it. " Then after a lapse of time, on another occasion, when the Surah Al-Qiyaamah was being revealed, the Holy Prophet involuntarily began to rehearse the words of the Revelation. Thereupon it was said: "O Prophet do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning. "Last of all, on the occasion of the revelation of Surah Ta Ha, the Holy Prophet on account of human weakness, again became afraid lest his memory should fail to preserve some portion of the 113 verses which were continuously revealed at that time, and therefore, he began to memorize them. Thereupon, it was said: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you. "After this, it never so happened that he felt any such danger, for apart form these three places, there is no other place in the Qur'an where there might be a reference to this matter

Theme and Subject Matter

This short surah contains three themes. Tauhid, instructions to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Hereafter.

In the first verse, the doctrine of Tauhid has been compressed into a single sentence, saying that Allah's name should be glorified and exalted, i. e. He should not be remembered by any name which mighty reflect a deficiency, fault, weakness, or an aspect of likeness, with created beings, for the root of all false creeds in the world are wrong concepts about Allah, which assumed the form of an erroneous name for His glorious and exalted Being. Therefore, for the correction of the creed, the primary thing is that Allah Almighty should be remembered only by the beautiful names which suit and befit Him.

In the next three verses, it has been said: "Your Lord, glorification of Whose name is being enjoined, is He Who created everything in the Universe, proportioned it, set it a destiny, taught it to perform the function for which it is created, and you witness this manifestation of His power day and night that He creates vegetation on the earth as well as reduces it to mere rubbish. No other being has the power to bring about spring nor the power to prevent autumn. "

Then, in the following two verses, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) his been consoled, as if to say: "Do not worry as to how you will remember word for word the Qur'an that is being revealed to you. It is for Us to preserve it in your memory, and its preservation is not in any way the result of any excellence in you but the result of Our bounty and favor, otherwise if We so will, We can cause you to forget it. "

Then, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "You have not been made responsible to bring everyone on to the right path; your only duty is to convey the truth, and the simplest way of conveying the truth is that admonition be given to him who is inclined to listen to the admonition and accept it, and the one who is not inclined to it, should not be pursued. The one who fears the evil consequences of deviation and falsehood, will listen to the truth and accept it, and the wretched one who avoids listening to and accepting it, will himself see his evil end. "'

The discourse has been summed up, saying: "Success is only for those who adopt purity of belief, morals and deed, and remember the name of their Lord and perform the Prayer. But, on the contrary, the people are wholly lost in seeking the ease, benefits and pleasures of the world, whereas they should actually endeavor for their well being in the Hereafter, for the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting and the blessings of the Hereafter are far better than the blessings of the world. This truth has not been expressed only in the Qur'an but in the books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses too, it had been brought to the notice of man.

88. Gaashiyah:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-ghaashiyah in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The whole subject matter of the Surah indicates that this too is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed; but this was the period when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started preaching his message publicly, and the people of Makkah were hearing it and ignoring it carelessly and thoughtlessly.

Theme and Subject Matter

To understand the subject matter well one should keep in view the fact that in the initial stage the preaching of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) mostly centered around two points which he wanted to instill in the people's minds: Tauhid and the Hereafter: and the people of Makkah were repudiating both. Let us now consider the subject matter and the style of this Surah.

At the outset, in order to arouse the people from their heedlessness, they have been plainly asked: "Do you have any knowledge of the time when an overwhelming calamity will descend? " Immediately after this details of the impending calamity are given as to how the people will be divided into two separate groups and will meet separate ends. One group of the people will go to Hell and they will suffer punishment; the second group will go to the sublime Paradise and will be provided with, blessings.

After thus arousing the people the theme suddenly changes and the question is asked: Do not these people, who frown and scorn the teaching of Tauhid and the news of the Hereafter being given by the Qur'an, observe the common things which they experience daily in their lives? Do they never consider how the camels, on whom their whole life activity in the Arabian desert depends, came into being, endowed precisely with the same characteristics as were required for the beast needed in their desert life? When they go on their journeys, they see the sky, the mountains, or the earth. Let them ponder over these three phenomena and consider as to how the sky was stretched above them, how the mountains were erected and how the earth was spread beneath them? Has all this come about without the skill and craftsmanship of an All-Powerful, All Wise Designer? If they acknowledge that a Creator has created all this with great wisdom and power and that no one else is an associate with Him in their creation, why then do they refuse to accept Him alone as their Lord and Sustainer? And if they acknowledge that that God had the power to create all this, then on what rational ground do they hesitate to acknowledge that that God also has the power to bring about Resurrection, to recreate man, and to make Hell and Heaven?
After making the truth plain by this concise and rational argument, the address turns from the disbelievers to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and he is told: "If these people do not acknowledge the truth, they may not; you have not been empowered to act with authority over them, so that you should coerce them into believing: your only task is to exhort, so exhort them. Ultimately they have to return to Us; then We shall call them to full account and shall inflict a heavy punishment on those who do not believe. "

89. Fajr:

Name
The Surah is so designated after the word wal-fajr with which it opens.
Period of Revelation
Its contents show that it was revealed at the stage when persecution of the new converts to Islam had begun in Makkah. On that very basis the people of Makkah have been warned of the evil end of the tribes of Ad and Thamud and of Pharaoh,
Theme and Subject Matter
Its theme is to affirm the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were not prepared to acknowledge, Let us consider the reasoning in the order in which it has been presented.
First of all, swearing oaths by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night, the listeners have been asked: "Are these things not enough to testify to the truth of that which you are refusing to acknowledge? " From the explanation that we have given of these four things in the corresponding notes, it will become clear that these things are a symbol of the regularity that exists in the night and day, and swearing oaths by these the question has been asked in the sense: Even after witnessing this wise system established by God, do you still need any other evidence to show that it is not

beyond the power of that God Who has brought about this system to establish the Hereafter, and that it is the very requirement of his wisdom that He should call man to account for his deeds?
Then, reasoning from man's own history, the evil end of the Ad and the Thamud and Pharaoh has been cited as an example to show that when they transgressed all limits and multiplied corruption in the earth, Allah laid upon them the scourge of His chastisement. This is a proof of the fact that the system of the universe is not being run by deaf and blind forces, nor is the world a lawless kingdom of a corrupt ruler, but a Wise Ruler is ruling over it, the demand of Whose wisdom and justice is continuously visible in the world itself in man's own history that He should call to account, and reward and punish accordingly, the being whom He has blessed with reason and moral sense and given the right of appropriation in the world.
After this, an appraisal has been made of the general moral state of human society of which Arab paganism was a conspicuous example; two aspects of it in particular, have been criticized: first the materialistic attitude of the people on account of which overlooking the moral good and evil, they regarded only the achievement of worldly wealth, rank and position, or the absence of it, as the criterion of honor or disgrace, and had forgotten that neither riches was a reward nor poverty a punishment, but that Allah is trying man in both conditions to see what attitude he adopts when blessed with wealth and how he behaves when afflicted by poverty. Second, the people's attitude under which the orphan child in their society was left destitute on the death of the father. Nobody asked after the poor; whoever could, usurped the whole heritage left by the deceased parent, and drove away the weak heirs fraudulently. The people were so afflicted with an insatiable greed for wealth that they were never satisfied however much they might hoard and amass. This criticism is meant to make them realize as to why the people with such an attitude and conduct in the life of the world should not be called to account for their misdeeds.
The discourse has been concluded with the assertion that accountability shall certainly be held and it will be held on the Day when the Divine Court will be established. At that time the deniers of the judgment will understand that which they are not understanding now in spite of instruction and admonition, but understanding then will be of no avail. The denier will regret and say, "Would that I had provided for this Day beforehand while I lived in the world. " But his regrets will not save him from Allah's punishment. However, as for the people who would have accepted the Truth, which the heavenly books and the Prophets of God were presenting, with full satisfaction of the heart in the world, Allah will be pleased with them and they will be well pleased with the rewards bestowed by Allah. They will be called upon to join the righteous and enter Paradise.

90. Balad:

Name
The Surah has been so named after the word al balad in the first verse.
Period of Revelation

Its subject matter and style resemble those of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah, but it contains a pointer which indicates that it was sent down in the period when the disbelievers of Makkah had resolved to oppose the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), and made it lawful for themselves to commit tyranny and excess against him.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Surah a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief sentences, and it is a miracle of the Qur'an that a complete ideology of life which could hardly be explained in a thick volume has been abridged most effectively in brief sentences of this short Surah. Its theme is to explain the true position of man in the world and of the world in relation to man and to tell that God has shown to man both the highways of good and evil, has also provided for him the means to judge and see and follow them, and now it rests upon mans own effort and judgment whether he chooses the path of virtue and reaches felicity or adopts the path of vice and meets with doom.

First, the city of Makkah and the hardships being faced therein by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the state of the children of Adam have been cited as a witness to the truth that this world is not a place of rest and ease for man, where he might have been born to enjoy life, but here he has been created into toil and struggle. If this theme is read with verse 39 of Surah An-Najm (Laisa lil insani illa ma saa: there is nothing for man but what he has striven for), it becomes plain that in this world the future of man depends on his toil and struggle, effort and striving.

After this, man's misunderstanding that he is all in all in this world and that there is no superior power to watch what he does and to call him to account, has been refuted.

Then, taking one of the many moral concepts of ignorance held by man, as an example, it has been pointed out what wrong criteria of merit and greatness he has proposed for himself in the world. The person who for ostentation and display squanders heaps of wealth, not only himself prides upon his extravagances but the people also admire him for it enthusiastically, whereas the Being Who is watching over his deeds, sees by what methods he obtained the wealth and in what ways and with what motives and intention he spent it.

Then Allah says: We have given man the means of knowledge and the faculties of thinking and understanding and opened up before him both the highways of virtue and vice: one way leads down to moral depravity, and it is an easy way pleasing for the self; the other way leads up to moral heights, which is steep like an uphill road, for scaling which man has to exercise self restraint. It is man's weakness that he prefers slipping down into the abyss to scaling the cliff.

Then, Allah has explained what the steep road is by following which man can ascend to the heights. It is that he should give up spending for ostentation, display and pride and should spend his wealth to help the orphans and the needy, should believe in Allah and His Religion and joining the company of believers should participate in the construction of a society which should fulfill the demands of virtue and righteousness patiently and should be compassionate to the people. The end of those who follow this way is that

they would become worthy of Allah's mercies. On the contrary, the end of those who follow the wrong way, is the fire of Hell from which there is no escape.

91. Shams:

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word Ash-shams with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style show that this Surah too was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah at a stage when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had grown very strong and intense.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to distinguish the good from the evil and to warn the people, who were refusing to understand this distinction and insisting on following the evil way, of the evil end.

In view of the subject matter this Surah consists of two parts. The first part consists of vv. 1-10, and the second of vv. 11-15. The first part deals with three things: (1) That just as the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the sky, are different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results, so are the good and the evil different front each other and contradictory in their effects and results; they are neither alike in their outward appearance nor can they be alike in their results. (2) That Allah after giving the human self powers of the body, sense and mind has not left it uninformed in the world, but has instilled into his unconscious by means of a natural inspiration the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, and the sense of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. (3) That the future of man depends on how by using the powers of discrimination, will and judgment that Allah has endowed him with, he develops the good and suppresses the evil tendencies of the self. If he develops the good inclination and frees his self of the evil inclinations, he will attain to eternal success, and if, on the contrary, he suppresses the good and promotes the evil, he will meet with disappointment and failure.

In the second part citing the historical precedent of the people of Thamud the significance of Apostleship has been brought out. A Messenger is raised in the world, because the inspirational knowledge of good and evil that Allah has placed in human nature, is by itself not enough for the guidance of man, but on account of his failure to understand it fully man has been proposing wrong criteria and theories of good and evil and thus going astray. That is why Allah sent down clear and definite Revelation to the Prophets (peace be upon them) to augment man's natural inspiration so that they may expound to the people as to what is good and what is evil. Likewise, the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) was sent to the people of Thamud, but the people overwhelmed by the evil of their self, had become so rebellious that they rejected him. And when he presented before them the miracle of the she camel, as demanded by themselves, the most wretched one of them, in spite of his warning, hamstrung it, in accordance with the will and desire of the people. Consequently, the entire tribe was overtaken by a disaster.

While narrating this story of the Thamud nowhere in the Surah has it been said "O people of Quraish, if you rejected your Prophet, Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), as the Thamud had rejected theirs, you too would meet with the same fate as they met. "The conditions at that time in Makkah were similar to those that had been created by the wicked among the people of Thamud against the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him). Therefore, the narration of this story in those conditions was by itself enough to suggest to the people of Makkah how precisely this historical precedent applied to them.

92. Layl:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word wal-layl with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter so closely resembles that of Surah Ash-Shams that each Surah seems to be an explanation of the other. It is one and the same thing which has been explained in Surah Ash-Shams in one way and in this Surah in another. This indicates that both these Surahs were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to distinguish between the two different ways of life and to explain the contrast between their ultimate ends and results. In view of the subject matter this Surah consists of two parts, the first part consisting of vv. 1-11 and the second of vv. 12-21.

In the first part, at the outset it has been pointed out that the strivings and doings that the individuals, nations and groups of mankind are engaged in the world, are, in respect of their moral nature, as divergent as the day is from the night, and the male from the female. After this, according to the general style of the brief Surahs of the Qur'an, three moral characteristics of one kind and three moral characteristics of the other kind have been presented as an illustration from among a vast collection of the strivings and activities of man, from which every man can judge which style of life is represented by one kind of the characteristics and which style of life by the other kind.

Both these styles have been described in such brief, elegant. and pithy sentences that they move the heart and go down into memory as soon as one hears them. Characteristics of the first kind are that one should spend one's wealth, adopt God-consciousness and piety, and acknowledge the good as good. The second kind of the characteristics are that one should be miserly, should least care for God's pleasure and His displeasure, and should repudiate what is good and right. Then it has been stated that these two modes of action which are clearly divergent, cannot be equal and alike in respect of their results. But, just as they are divergent in their nature, so they are divergent in their results.

The person (or group of persons) who adopts the first mode of action, Allah will make easy for him the correct way of life, so much so that doing good will become easy for him and doing evil difficult. On the contrary, he who adopts the second mode of life, Allah will make easy for him the difficult and hard way of life, so much so that doing

evil will become easy for him and doing good difficult. This passage has been concluded with a most effective and touching sentence, saying: "This worldly wealth for the sake of which man is even prepared to risk his life: will not go down with him into the grave; therefore, what will it avail him after death? "'

In the second part also three truths have been stated equally briefly. First, that Allah has not left man uninformed in the examination hall of the world, but He has taken on Himself the responsibility to tell him which one is the straight and right way out of the different ways of life. Here, there was no need to point out that by sending His Messenger and His Book He has fulfilled His this responsibility, for both the Messenger and the Book were present to afford the guidance. Second, that the Master of both the world and the Hereafter is Allah alone. If you seek the world, it is He Who will give it, and if you seek the Hereafter, again it is He Who will give it. Now, it is for you to decide what you should seek from Him. The third truth that has been stated is that the wretched one who rejects the good, which is being presented through the Messenger and the Book, and turns away from it, will have a blazing fire ready for him. As for the God fearing person who spends his wealth in a good cause, without any selfish motive, only for the sake of winning his Lord's good pleasure, his Lord will be pleased with him and will bless him with so much that he will be well pleased with Him.

93. Duhaa:

Name

The Surah takes its name Ad-Duhaa from the very first word.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter clearly indicates that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah. Traditions also show that the revelations were suspended for a time, which caused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to be deeply distressed and grieved. On this account he felt very anxious that perhaps he had committed some error because of which his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. Thereupon he was given the consolation that revelation had not been stopped because of some displeasure but this was necessitated by the same expediency as underlies the peace and stillness of the night after the bright day, as if to say: "If you had continuously been exposed to the intensely bright light of Revelation (Wahi) your nerves could not have endured it. Therefore, an interval was given in order to afford you peace and tranquillity. " This state was experienced by the Holy Prophet in the initial stage of the Prophethood when he was not yet accustomed to hear the intensity of Revelation. On this basis, observance of a pause in between was necessary. This we have already explained in the introduction to Surah Al Muddaththir; and in E. N. 5 of Surah Al-Muzzammil also we have explained what great burden of the coming down of Revelation he had to bear. Later, when the Holy Prophet developed the power to bear this burden, there was no longer any need for long gaps.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to console the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and its object to remove his anxiety and distress, which he had been caused by the suspension of Revelation. First of all, swearing an oath by the bright morning and the stillness of night, he has been reassured, so as to say: "Your Lord has not at all forsaken you, nor is he displeased with you. " Then, he has been given the good news that the hardships that he was experiencing in the initial stage of his mission, would not last long, for every later period of life for him would be better than the former period, and before long Allah would bless him so abundantly that he would be well pleased. This is one of the express prophecies of the Qur'an, which proved literally true, afterwards, whereas when this prophecy was made there seemed not to be the remotest chance that the helpless and powerless man who had come out to wage a war against the ignorance and paganism of the entire nation, would ever achieve such wonderful success.

Then, addressing His Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) Allah says: "O My dear Prophet, what has caused you the anxiety and distress that your Lord has forsaken you, and that We are displeased with you? Whereas the fact is that We have been good to you with kindness after kindness ever since the day of your birth. You were born an orphan, We made the best arrangement for your upbringing and care: you were unaware of the Way, We showed you the Way; you were indigent, We made you rich. All this shows that you have been favored by Us from the very beginning and Our grace and bounty has been constantly focused on you. "Here, one should also keep in view vv. 37-42 of Surah Ta Ha, where Allah, while sending the Prophet Moses to confront a tyrant like Pharaoh, encouraged and consoled him, saying: "We have been looking after you with kindness ever since your birth; therefore, you should be satisfied that you will not be left alone in this dreadful mission. Our bounty will constantly be with you. "

In conclusion, Allah has instructed His Prophet (upon whom be peace) telling him how he should treat the creatures of God to repay for the favors He has done him and how he should render thanks for the blessings He has bestowed on him.

94. Inshiraah:

Name

The Surah is so designated after the first sentence.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter so closely resembles that of Surah Ad-Duhaa that both these Surah seem to have been revealed in about the same period under similar conditions. According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, it was sent down in Makkah just after wad-Duhaa.

Theme and Subject Matter

The aim and object of this Surah too is to console and encourage the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace). Before his call he never had to encounter the conditions which he suddenly had to encounter after it when he embarked on his mission of inviting the people to Islam. This was by itself a great revolution in his own life of which he had no idea in his life before Prophethood. No sooner had he started preaching

the message of Islam than the same society which had esteemed him with unique honor, turned hostile to him. The same relatives and friends, the same clansmen and neighbors, who used to treat him with the highest respect, began to shower him with abuse and invective. No one in Makkah was prepared to listen to him; he began to be ridiculed and mocked in the street and on the road; and at every step he had to face new difficulties. Although gradually he became accustomed to the hardships, even much severer ones, yet the initial stage was very discouraging for him. That is why first Surah Ad-Duhaa was sent down to console him, and then this Surah.

In it, at the outset, Allah says: "We have favored you, O Prophet, with three great blessings; therefore you have no cause to be disheartened. The first is the blessing of Sharh Sadr (opening up of the breast), the second of removing from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back before the call, and the third of exalting your renown the like of which has never been granted to any man before. Further below in the notes we have explained what is implied by each of these blessings and how great and unique these blessings indeed are!

After this, the Lord and Sustainer of the universe has reassured His Servant and Messenger (upon whom be peace) that the period of hardships which he is passing through, is not very long, but following close behind it there is also a period of ease. This same thing has been described in Surah Ad-Duhaa, saying: "Every later period is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord will give you so much that you will be well pleased. "

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been instructed, so as to say, "You can develop the power to bear and resist the hardships of the initial stage only by one means, and it is this: `When you are free from your occupations, you should devote yourself to the labor and toil of worship, and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord'. "This same instruction has been given him in much greater detail in Surah Al-Muzzammil 1-9.

95. Teen:

Name

The Surah has been so named after the very First word at-teen.

Period of Revelation

According to Qatadah, this Surah is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Ibn Abbas: first that it is a Makki Surah, and second that it is Madani. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makki revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words hadha-al-balad-il-amin (this city of peace) for Makkah. Obviously, if it had been revealed at Madinah, it would not be correct to use the words "this city" for Makkah Besides, a study of the contents of the Surah shows that it belongs to the earliest period of Makkah, for in it there is no sign whatever to indicate that during the period of its revelation any conflict had started between Islam and unbelief. Moreover, it reflects the same style of the earliest revelations of Makkah period in which briefly and succinctly the people have been made to realize that the judgment of the Hereafter is necessary and absolutely rational.

Theme and Subject Matter
Its theme is the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter. For this purpose first swearing an oath by the habitats of some illustrious Prophets, it has been stated that Allah has created man in the most excellent of molds. Although at other places in the Qur'an, this truth has been expressed in different ways, for example, at some places it has been said: "Allah appointed man His vicegerent on the earth and commanded the angels to bow down to him (Al-Baqara: 30, 34, Al-An`aam: 165, Al-A`raaf: 11, Al-Hijr 28, 29, An-Naml: 62, Saad 71 - 73); " at others that: "Man has become bearer of the Divine trust, which the earth and the heavens and the mountains did not have the power to bear (Al-Ahzab 72); " and at still others that: "We honored the children of Adam and exalted them above many of Our other creatures (Bani Israil 70), " yet here the statement made on oath in particular by the habitats of the Prophets that man has been created in the finest of molds, signifies that mankind has been blessed with such an excellent mold and nature that it gave birth to men capable of attaining to the highest position of Prophethood, a higher position than which has not been attained by any other creature of God.
Then, it has been stated that there are two kinds of men. those who in spite of having been created in the finest of molds, become inclined to evil and their moral degeneration causes them to be reduced to the lowest of the low, and those who by adopting the way of faith and righteousness remain secure from the degeneration and consistent with the noble position, which is the necessary demand of their having been created in the best of molds. The existence among mankind of both these kinds of men is such a factual thing which no one can deny, for it is being observed and experienced in society everywhere at all times.
In conclusion, this factual reality has been used as an argument to prove that when among the people there are these two separate and quite distinct kinds, how can one deny the judgment and retribution for deeds If the morally degraded are not punished and the morally pure and exalted arc not rewarded and both end in the dust alike, it would mean that there is no justice in the Kingdom of God; whereas human nature and common sense demand that a judge should do justice. How then can one conceive that Allah, Who is the most just of all judges, would not do justice?

96. Iqra':

Name
The Surah is so entitled after the word `alaq in the second verse.
[The Surah is commonly entitled "Al `Alaq" for the reason mentioned above. It is also entitled "Iqra'" for its first words: Iqra' bismi rabbika... Dar el Hadith]
Period of Revelation
This Surah has two parts: the first part consists of vv. 1-5, and the second of vv. 6-19. About the first part a great majority of the Islamic scholars are agreed that it forms the very first Revelation to be sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In this regard, the Hadith from Hadrat Aishah, which Imam Ahmad,

Bukhari, Muslim, and other traditionists have related with several chains of authorities, is one of the most authentic Ahadith on the subject. In it Hadrat Aishah has narrated the full story of the beginning of revelation as she herself heard it from the Holy Messenger of Allah. Besides, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa al-Ashari and a group of the Companions also are reported to have stated that these were the very first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed to the Holy Prophet. The second part was sent down afterwards when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to perform the prescribed Prayer in the precincts of the Kabah and Abu Jahl tried to prevent him from this with threats.

Beginning of Revelation

The traditionists have related on the strength of their respective authorities the story of the beginning of revelation from Imam Az-Zuhri, who had it from Hadrat Urwah bin Zubair, who had it from Hadrat Aishah, his aunt. She states that revelations to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began in the form of true (according to other traditions, good) visions. Whichever vision he saw it seemed as though he saw it in broad daylight. Afterwards solitude became dear to him and he would go to the Cave of Hiraa' to engage in worship there for several days and nights (Hadrat Aishah has used the word tahannuth, which Imam Zuhri has explained as ta`abbud: devotional exercises.

This was some kind of worship which he performed, for until then he had not been taught the method of performing the Prayer by Allah). He would take provisions with him and stay there for several days, then would return to Hadrat Khadijah who would again provide for him for a few more days.

One day when he was in the Cave of Hiraa', Revelation came down to him unexpectedly and the Angel said, to him: "Read". After this Hadrat Aishah reports the words of the Holy Prophet himself, to the effect,

"I said: I cannot read! There upon the Angel took me and pressed me until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I said: I cannot read! He pressed me a second time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I again said: I cannot read! He pressed me for the third time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Iqra' bismi Rabbi kal-ladhi khalaqa: (Read in the name of your Lord Who created) till he reached ma lam ya` lam (what he did not know).

Hadrat Aishah says: "Then the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) returned home to Hadrat Khadijah trembling with fear, and said to her: `Cover me, cover me', and he was covered. When terror left him, he said: `O Khadijah, what has happened to me? ' Then he narrated to her whatever had happened, and said: `I fear for my life'.

She said; `No never! Be of good cheer. By God, never will God debase you: you treat the kindred well, you speak the truth, (one tradition adds: you restore what is entrusted to you), you bear the burden of the helpless, you help the poor, you entertain the guests, and you cooperate in good works.

Then she took him to Waraqah bin Naufal, who was her cousin. He had become a Christian in pre-Islamic days, wrote the Gospel in Arabic and Hebrew, and had become very old and blind. Hadrat Khadijah said: `Brother, listen to the son of your brother. ' Waraqah said to the Holy Prophet: `What have you seen, nephew? ' The Holy Prophet

described what he had seen. Waraqah said; `This is the same Namus (the Angel of Revelation) which Allah had sent down to Moses. Would that I were a young man during your Prophethood! Would that I were alive when your tribe would expel you! '

The Holy Prophet said: `Will they expel me? ' Waraqah said; `Yes, never has it so happened that a person brought what you have brought and was not treated as an enemy. If I live till then I would help you with all the power at my command. ' But not very long after this Waraqah died. "

This narrative is explicit that even until a moment before the coming Angel the Holy Messenger of Allah intimately aware of his life, his Affairs and dealings. When he also heard of his experience, she did not regard it as an evil suggestion, but immediately said that it was the Namus who had descended on Moses (peace be upon him). This meant that even according to him the Holy Prophet was such a sublime person that there was nothing surprising in his being elevated to the office of Prophethood.

Occasion of Revelation of vv. 6-19

This second part of the Surah was revealed when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to perform the Prayer in the Islamic way in the Ka'bah and Abu Jahl threatened and tried to prevent him from this. It so happened that after his appointment to Prophethood even before he could start preaching Islam openly, he began to perform the Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah in the way Allah taught him; and from this the Quraish felt for the first time that he had adopted a new religion. The other people were watching it with curiosity, but Abu Jahl in his arrogance and pride threatened the Holy Prophet and forbade him to worship in that way in the Ka'bah. In this connection, quite a number of the Ahadith have been related from Hadarat Abdullah ibn Abbas and Hadrat Abu Huraira, which mention the foolish behavior of Abu Jahl.

Hadrat Abu Huraira says that Abu Jahl asked the people of Quraish: "Does Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) set his face on the ground before you? "When they replied in the affirmative, he said: "By Lat and Uzza, if I ever catch him in that act of worship, I would set my foot on his neck and rub his face in the dust. "Then it so happened that he saw the Holy Messenger in that posture and came forward to set his foot on his neck, but suddenly turned back as if in a fright and being asked what was the matter, he said there was a ditch of fire and a terrible apparition between himself and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and some wings. On hearing this the Holy Prophet remarked: "Had he come near me, the angels would have smitten and torn him to pieces. " (Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Nu'aim Isfahani, Baihaqi).

According to Ibn Abbas, Abu Jahl said: "If I caught Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) performing his Prayer by the Ka'bah, I would trample his neck down. " When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he said: "If he acted so, the angels would seize him there and then? " (Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Abdur Razzaq, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah).

According to another tradition from Ibn Abbas, the Holy Prophet was performing his Prayer at the Maqam Ibrahim. Abu Jahl passed that way and said: "O Muhammad, did I

not forbid you this, and then he started to threaten him. "In reply the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) rebuked him severely. There upon he said: "O Muhammad, on what strength do you rebuke me? By God, my followers in this valley far exceed yours in number. " (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah).

Because of these very incidents the portion of this Surah beginning with Kalla inn al-insana la yat-gha was sent down. Naturally the place of this part should be the same as assigned to it in this Surah of the Qur'an, for after the coming down of the first Revelation the Holy Prophet had given expression to Islam first of all by the act of Prayer, and his conflict with the pagans.

97. Qadr:

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word al-qadr in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani revelation is disputed. Abu Hayyan in Al-Bahr al-Muhit has made the claim that the majority of scholars regard it as a Madani Surah. All bin Ahmad al-Wahidi in his commentary says that this is the first Surah to be sent down in Madinah. Contrary to this, Al Mawardi says that according to the majority of scholars it is a Makki revelation, and the same view has Imam Suyuti expressed in Al-Itqan. Ibn Mardayah has cited Ibn Abbas, Ibn Az Zubair and Hadrat Aishah as saying that this Surah was revealed at Makkah. A study of the contents also shows that it should have been revealed at Makkah as we shall explain below.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to acquaint man with the value, worth and importance of the Qur'an. Its being placed just after Surah Al-Alaq in the arrangement of the Qur'an by itself explains that the Holy Book, the revelation of which began with the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq. was sent down in a destiny making night. It is a glorious Book and its revelation for mankind is full of blessings.

At the outset, Allah says: "We have sent it down. " That is, it is not a composition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessing) himself, but We Ourself have revealed it.

Then, it is said that "We sent it down in the Night of Destiny. " Night of Destiny lies two meanings and both are implied here. First, that it is the night during which destinies are decided; or, in other words, it is not an ordinary night like the other nights, but a night in which destinies are made or marred. The revelation of this Book in this night is not merely the revelation of a book but an event which will change the destiny of not only the Quraish, or of Arabia, but of, the entire world. The same thing has been said in Surah Ad-Dukhan for which please see Introduction to that Surah and E. N. 3 thereof. The other meaning is that this is, a night of unique honor, dignity and glory; so much so that it is better than a thousand months. Thus, the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned, as if to say: "You on account of your ignorance regard this Book, which

Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has presented, as a calamity for yourselves and complain that a disaster has befallen you, whereas the night in which it was decreed to be sent down was such a blessed night that a task was accomplished in it for the well being of mankind, which had never been accomplished even during a thousand months of history. This also has been said in verse 3 of Ad-Dukhan in another way, which we have explained in the introduction to that Surah.
In conclusion, it has been stated that in this night the angels and Gabriel descend with every decree (which in verse 4 of Surah Ad-Dukhan has been described as amr-hakeem: wise decree) by the leave of their Lord, and it is all peace from evening till morning; that is, there is no interference of evil in it, for all decrees of Allah are intended to promote good and not evil. So much so that even if a decision to destroy a nation is taken, it is taken for the sake of ultimate good, not evil.

98. Bayyinah:

Name
The Surah is so designated after the word al-bayyinah occurring at the end of the first verse.
Period of Revelation
Where it was revealed, at Makkah or Madinah, is also disputed. Some commentators say it is a Makki revelation according to most scholars; others say it is a Madani revelation according to most scholars. Ibn Az Zubair and Ata bin Yasar hold the view that it is Madani. Ibn Abbas and Qatadah are reported to have held two views, first that it is Makki, second that it is Madani. Hadrat Aishah regards it as a Makki Surah. Abu Hayyan, author of Bahr al-Muhit, and Abdul Mun`im ibn al-Faras, author of Ahkam al-Qur'an, also have preferred to regard it as Makki. As for its contents, there is nothing in it to indicate whether it was revealed at Makkah or at Madinah.
Theme and Subject Matter
Its having been placed after Surahs Al-Alaq and Al-Qadr in the arrangement of the Qur'an is very meaningful. Surah Al-Alaq contains the very first revelation, while Surah Al-Qadr shows as to when it was revealed, and in this Surah it has been explained why it was necessary to send a Messenger along with this Holy Book.
First of all the need of sending a Messenger has been explained, saying: The people of the world, be they from among the followers of the earlier scriptures or from among the idolaters, could not possibly be freed from their state of unbelief, until a Messenger was sent whose appearance by itself should be a clear proof of his apostleship, and he should present the Book of God before the people in its original, pristine form, which should be free from every mixture of falsehood corrupting the earlier Divine Books; and which should comprise sound teachings.
Then, about the errors of the followers of the earlier Books it has been said that the cause of their straying into different creeds was not that Allah had not provided any guidance to them, but they strayed only after a clear statement of the Right Creed had come to them. From this it automatically follows that they themselves were responsible

for their error and deviation. Now, if even after the coming of the clear statement through this Messenger, they continued to stray, their responsibility would further increase.
In this very connection, it has been stated that the Prophets who came from Allah and the, Books sent down by Him, did not enjoin anything but that the way of sincere and true service to Allah be adopted, apart from all other ways, no one else's worship, service or obedience be mixed with His, the salat be established and the zakat be paid. This same has been the true religion since ever. From this also it automatically follows that the followers of the earlier scriptures, straying from this true religion, have added extraneous things to it, which are false, and Allah's this Messenger has come to invite them back to, the same original faith.
In conclusion, it has been pointed out clearly that the followers of the earlier Books and the idolaters who would refuse to acknowledge this Messenger are the worst of creatures: their punishment is an everlasting Hell; and the people who would believe and act righteously, and would spend life in the world in awe of God, are the best of creatures: their reward is eternal Paradise wherein they will live for ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they became well pleased with Allah.

99. Zilzaal:

Name
It is derived from the word zilzaal in the first verse.
Period of Revelation
Whether or not it was revealed, at Makkah or Madinah, is disputed. Ibn Masud, Ata, Jabir, and Mujahid say that it is a Makki Surah and a statement of Ibn Abbas also supports this view. On the contrary, Qatadah and Muqatil say that it is Madini and another statement of Ibn Abbas also has been cited in support of this view.
That it is a Madani Surah is reasoned from a tradition from Hadrat Abu Said Khudri, which Ibn Abi Hatim has related from him. He says: "When the verse Fa-man ya`mal mithqala dharratin khairan yarah, wa man ya`mal mithqala dharratin sharran yarah, was revealed, I said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall I really see my deeds? The Holy Messenger replied in the affirmative. I submitted: And every major sin? He replied yes. I said: And the minor sins too? He replied yes. Thereupon I exclaimed that I would then be ruined. The Holy Prophet said: Rejoice, O Abu Sa`eed, for each good act will be equal to ten good acts like it. " The basis of the argument for this Surah's being Madani is that Hadrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri was an inhabitant of Madinah and reached maturity after the Battle of Uhud. Therefore, if this Surah was revealed in his presence, as is apparent from his statement, it must be a Madani Surah.
However, the practice that the Companions and their immediate successors followed in respect of the occasion of the revelation of the verses and Surahs, has already been explained in the Introduction to Surah Ad-Dahr above.
Therefore, a Companion's saying that a verse was sent down on this or that particular occasion is no proof that it was sent down on that very occasion. It may well be that

after coming of age when Hadrat Aba Sa`eed heard this Surah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, terrified by its last portion he might have asked the Holy Prophet the questions which we have cited above, and he might have narrated the incident saying that when this verse was revealed he put this and this question to the Holy Prophet.

In the absence of this tradition every reader who reads the Qur'an with understandings will feel that it is a Makki Surah. More than that: from its theme and style he would feel that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah when the fundamental principles and beliefs of Islam were being presented before the people in a concise but highly effective way.

Theme end Subject Matter

Its theme is the second life after death and presentation in it before man of the full record of the deeds done by him in the world. In the first three sentences it has been told briefly how the second life after death will take place and how confounding it will be for man. In the next two sentences it has been said that this very earth on which man has lived and performed all kinds of deeds thoughtlessly, and about which he never could fancy that this lifeless thing would at some time in the future bear witness to his deeds, will speak out on that Day by Allah's command and will state in respect of each individual person what act he had committed at a particular time and place. Then, it has been said that men on that Day, rising from their graves, will come out in their varied groups from all corners of the earth, to be shown their deeds and works, and their presentation of the deeds will be so complete and detailed that not an atom's weight of any good or evil act will be left unnoticed or hidden from his eyes.

100. Aadiyaat:

Name

The Surah has been so entitled after the word al aadiyaat with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani Surah is disputed. Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud, Jabir, Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, and Ata say that it is Makki. Hadrat Anas bin Malik, and Qatadah say that it is Madani; and from Hadrat Ibn Abbas two views have been reported, first that it is a Makki Surah, and second that it is Madani. But the subject matter of the Surah and its style clearly indicate that it is no only Makki but was revealed in the earliest stage of Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its object is to make the people realize how evil man becomes when he denies the Hereafter, or becomes heedless of it, and also to warn them that in the Hereafter not only their visible and apparent deeds but even the secrets hidden in their hearts too will be subjected to scrutiny.

For this purpose the general chaos and confusion prevailing in Arabia, with which the whole country was in turmoil, has been presented as an argument. Bloodshed, loot and plunder raged on every side. Tribes were subjecting tribes to raids, and no one could have peaceful sleep at night from fear that some enemy tribe might raid his settlement

early in the morning. Every Arab was fully conscious of this state of affairs and realized that it was wrong. Although the plundered bemoaned his miserable, helpless state and the plunderer rejoiced, yet when the plunderer himself was plundered, he too realized how abject was the condition in which the whole nation was involved. Referring to this very state of affairs, it has been said: Unaware of the second life after death and his accountability before God in it, man has become ungrateful to his Lord and Sustainer. He is using the powers and abilities given by God for perpetrating tyranny and pillage; blinded by the love of worldly wealth he tries to obtain it by every means, however impure and filthy, and his own state itself testifies that by abusing the powers bestowed by his Lord he is being ungrateful to Him. He would never have behaved so, had he known the time when the dead will be raised from the graves, and when the intentions and motives with which he had done all sorts of deeds in the world, will be exposed and brought out before everyone to see. At that time the Lord and Sustainer of men shall be well informed of what one had done and what punishment or reward one deserved.

101. Al-Qaari`ah:

Name

The Surah takes its name from its first word al-qaari`ah. This is not only a name but also the title of its subject matter, for the Surah is devoted to Resurrection.

Period of Revelation

There is no dispute about its being a Makki Surah. Its contents show that this too is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is Resurrection and the Hereafter. At the outset, the people have been aroused and alarmed, saying: "The Great Disaster! What is the Great Disaster? And what do you know what the Great Disaster is? "Thus, after preparing the listeners for the news of the dreadful calamity, Resurrection has been depicted before them in two sentences, saying that on that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like so many scattered moths around a light, and the mountains uprooted, will their cohesion and will fly about like carded wool. Then, it has been said that when Allah's Court is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds. The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their evil deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness, and the people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their evil deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.

102. Takaathur:

Name

The Surah taken its name from the word at takaathur in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abu Hayyan and Shaukani say that this Surah, according to all commentators, is Makki, and this same is the well known view according to Imam Suyuti. However, there are

some traditions, on the basis of which it is considered a Madani Surah, and they are as follows:
Ibn Hatim has cited Abu Buraidah as saying that this Surah was sent down concerning the two tribes, Bani Harithah and Bani al-Harith, of the Ansaar. The two tribes had first recounted the glories and illustrious deeds of their living men; then they had gone to the grave yard and bragged of the glorious deeds of their dead. Thereupon the Divine Revelation Alhaakum at takaathur came down. But, if the practice of the Companions and their successors concerning the occasions of revelation, is kept in view, this tradition is no argument to prove that Surah At Takaathur was sent down on that very occasion, but it shows that this Surah fully applied to the act of the two tribes.
Imam Bukhari and Ibn Jarir have cited this view of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka`b: "We took the Holy Prophet" saying: `If the son of Adam had two valley full of wealth, he would long for a third valley; the son of Adam's belly cannot be filled but by earth, to be from the Qur'an until Alhaakum at takaathur was sent down. This Hadith has been regarded as an argument for Surah At-Takaathur to be a Madani Surah on the ground that Hadrat Ubayy had become a Muslim in Madinah. But Hadrat Ubayy's statement does not indicate in what sense the Companions regarded this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as belonging to the Qur'an. If it means that they regarded it as a verse of the Qur'an, it cannot be acceptable, for a great majority of the Companions consisted of the men who were well aware of each and every word of the Qur'an; they could not have the misunderstanding that the Hadith was a verse of the Qur'an. And if its belonging to the Qur'an is taken to mean its being derived from the Qur'an, the tradition can also mean that when the Companions who entered Islam in Madinah, heard this Surah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, they thought that it had been revealed just then, and then about the Holy Prophet's above saying they formed the idea that it was derived from this very Surah.
Ibn Jarir Tirmidhi, Ibn al Mundhir and other traditionists have related this view of Hadrat Ali: "We were in doubt about the torment of the grave until Alhaakum at takaathur was sent down. " This view has been regarded as an argument for Surah At-Takaathur to be Madani on the ground that the torment of the grave was first mentioned at Madinah; no mention of it was ever made at Makkah. But this is wrong. In the Makki Surahs of the Qur'an, the torment of the grave has been mentioned at many places so clearly that there can he no room for any such doubt; for example, see Al-An`aam: 93, An-Nahl: 28, Al-Muminun: 99-100, Al-Mu'min: 45-46, which are all Makki Surahs. Therefore, if anything is proved by Hadrat Ali's saying, it is that Surah At-Takaathur had been revealed before the revelation of the above mentioned Makki Surahs and its revelation had removed the Companions doubt about the torment of the grave.
That is why, in spite of these traditions, a great majority of the commentators are agreed that this Surah is Makki. In our opinion this is not only a Makki Surah but in view of its contents and style it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.
Theme and Subject Matter

In it the people have been warned of the evil consequences of world worship because of which they spend their lives in acquiring more and more of worldly wealth, material benefits and pleasures, and position and power, till death, and in vying with one another and bragging and boasting about their acquisitions. This one pursuit has so occupied them that they are left with no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things in life. After warning the people of its evil end they have been told us if to say: "These blessings which you are amassing and enjoying thoughtlessly, are not mere blessings but are also a means of your trial. For each one of these blessings and comforts you will surely be called to account in the Hereafter. "

103. Asr:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-asr occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Mujahid, Qatadah and Muqatil regard it as a Madani Surah, yet a great majority of the commentators opine that it is Makki; its subject matter also testifies that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah, when the message of Islam was being presented in brief but highly impressive sentences so that the listeners who heard them once could not forget them even if they wanted to, for they were automatically committed to memory.

Theme and Subject Matter

This Surah is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words, which is too vast in content to be fully expressed even in a book. In it, in a clear and plain way it has been stated what is the way to true success for man and what is the way to ruin and destruction for him. Imam Shafi`i has very rightly said that if the people only considered this Surah well, it alone would suffice them for their guidance. How important this Surah was in the sight of the Companions can be judged from the tradition cited from Hadrat Abdullah bin Hisn ad-Darimi Abu Madinah, according to which whenever any two of them met they would not part company until they had recited Surah Al-Asr to each other. (Tabarani)

104. Humazah:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word humazah occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

All commentators are agreed that it is a Makki Surah; a study of its subject matter and style shows that this too is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In it some of the evils prevalent among the materialistic hoarders of wealth in the pre-Islamic days have been condemned. Every Arab knew that they actually existed in their society; they regarded them as evils and nobody thought they were good. After calling attention to this kind of ugly character, the ultimate end in the Hereafter of the people

having this kind of character has been stated. Both these things (i. e. the character and his fate in the Hereafter) have been depicted in a way which makes the listener automatically reach the conclusion that such a man fitly deserves to meet such an end. And since in the world, people of such character do not suffer any punishment, but seem to be thriving instead, the occurrence of the Hereafter becomes absolutely inevitable.

If this Surah is read in the sequence of the Surahs beginning with Az-Zilzal, one can fully well understand how the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its teachings were impressed on the peoples minds in the earliest stage in Makkah. In Surah Az-Zilzal, it was said that in the Hereafter man's full record will be placed before him and not an atom's weight of good or evil done by him in the world will have been left unrecorded.

In Surah Al-Aadiyaat, attention was drawn to the plunder and loot, blood-shed and vandalism, prevailing in Arabia before Islam; then making the people realize, that the way the powers given by God were being abused, was indeed an expression of sheer ingratitude to Him, they were told that the matter would not end up in the world, but in the second life after death not only their deeds but their intentions and motives too would be examined, and their Lord fully well knows which of them deserves what reward or punishment.

In Surah Al-Qaari`ah after depicting Resurrection the people were warned that in the Hereafter a man's good or evil end will be dependent on whether the scale of his good deeds was heavier, or the scale of his evil deeds was heavier.

In Surah At-Takaathur the people were taken to task for the materialistic mentality because of which they remained occupied in seeking increase in worldly benefits, pleasures, comforts and position, and in vying with one another for abundance of everything until death overtook them. Then, warning them of the evil consequences of their heedlessness, they were told that the world was not an open table of food for then to pick and choose whatever they pleased, but for every single blessing that they were enjoying in the world, they would have to render an account to their Lord and Sustainer as to how they obtained it and how they used it.

In Surah Al-Asr it was declared that each member, each group and each community of mankind, even the entire world of humanity, was in manifest loss, if its members were devoid of Faith and righteous deeds and of the practice of exhorting others to truth and patience. Immediately after this comes Surah Al-Humazah in which after presenting a specimen of leadership of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, the people have been asked the question: "What should such a character deserve if not loss and perdition? "

105. Feel:

Name

The Surah derives its name from the word as-haab al feel in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Makki Surah; and if it is studied against its historical background it appears that it must have been sent down in the very earliest stage at Makkah.

Historical Background

As we have explained in E. N. 4 of Surah Al-Buruj above, in retaliation for the persecution of the followers of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be on him) in Najran by the Jewish ruler Dhu-Nuwas of Yaman, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and put an end to the Himyarite rule there, and in 525 A. D. this whole land passed under Abyssinian control. This happened, in fact, through collaboration between the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Abyssinian kingdom, for the Abyssinians at that time had no naval fleet. The fleet was provided by Byzantium and Abyssinia sent 70, 000 of its troops by it across the Red Sea to Yaman. At the outset one should understand that all this did not happen under the religious zeal but there were economic and political factors also working behind it, and probably these were the real motive, and retaliation for the Christian blood was just an excuse. Since the time the Byzantine empire had occupied Egypt and Syria, it had been trying to gain control over the trade going on between East Africa, India, Indonesia, etc. , and the Byzantine dominions: from the Arabs, who had been controlling it for centuries, so as to earn maximum profits by eliminating the intermediary Arab merchants. For this purpose, in 24 or 25 B. C. , Caesar Augustas sent a large army under the Roman general, Aelius Gallus, which landed on the western coast of Arabia, in order to intercept and occupy the sea route between southern Arabia and Syria. But the campaign failed to achieve its objective on account of the extreme geographical conditions of Arabia. After this, the Byzantines brought their fleet into the Red Sea and put an end to the Arab trade which they carried out by sea, with the result that they were left only with the land route. To capture this very land route they conspired with the Abyssinian Christians and aiding them with their fleet helped them to occupy Yaman.

The Arab historians statements about the Abyssinian army that invaded Yaman are different. Hafiz Ibn Kathir says that it was led by two commanders, Aryat and Abrahah, and according to Muhammad bin Ishaq, its commander was Aryat, and Abrahah was included in it. Then both are agreed that Aryat and Abrahah fell out, Aryat was killed in the encounter, and Abrahah took possession of the country; then somehow he persuaded the Abyssinian king to appoint him his viceroy over Yaman. On the contrary, the Greek and Syriac historians state that when after the conquest of Yaman, the Abyssinians started putting to death the Yamanite chiefs, who had put up resistance, one of the chiefs, named As-Sumayfi Ashwa (whom the Greek historians call Esymphaeus) yielded to the Abyssinians and promising to pay tribute obtained the Abyssinian king's warrant to be governor over Yaman. But the Abyssinian army revolted against him and made Abrahah governor in his place. This man was the slave of a Greek merchant of the Abyssinian seaport of Adolis, who by clever diplomacy had come to wield great influence in the Abyssinian army occupying Yaman. The troops sent by the Negus to punish him either warned him or were defeated by him. Subsequently, after the death of the king, his successor was reconciled to accept him as his viceregent of Yaman. (The Greek historians write him as Abrames and the Syriac historians as Abraham. Abrahah perhaps is an Abyssinian variant of Abraham, for its Arabic version is Ibrahim).

This man through passage of time became an independent ruler of Yaman. He acknowledged the sovereignty of the Negus only in name and described himself as his deputy. The influence he wielded can be judged from the fact that after the restoration of the dam of Ma'rib in 543 A. D. he celebrated the event by holding a grand feast, which was attended by the ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor, king of Iran, king of Hirah, and king of Ghassan. Its full details are given in the inscription that Abrahah installed on the dam. This inscription is extant and Glaser has published it. (For further details, see E. N. 37 of the commentary of Surah Saba).

After stabilizing his rule in Yaman Abrahah turned his attention to the objective which from the very beginning of this campaign had been before the Byzantine empire and its allies, the Abyssinian Christians, i. e. to spread Christianity in Arabia, on the one hand, and to capture the trade that was carried out through the Arabs between the eastern lands and the Byzantine dominions, on the other. The need, for this increased because the Byzantine struggle for power against the Sasanian empire of Iran had blocked all the routes of the Byzantine trade with the East.

To achieve this objective, Abrahah built in San`aa, the capital of Yaman, a magnificent cathedral, called by the Arabian historians al-Qalis, al-Qullais, or al-Qulais, this word being an Arabic version of the Greek word Ekklesia, church. According, to Muhammad bin lshaq, after having completed the building, he wrote to the Negus, saying: "I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs pilgrimage to it. "Ibn Kathir writes that he openly declared his intention in Yaman and got it publicly announced. He, in fact, wanted to provoke the Arabs into doing something which should provide him with an excuse to attack Makkah and destroy the Ka`bah. Muhammad bin Ishaq says that an Arab, enraged at this public proclamation somehow went into the cathedral and defiled it. Ibn Kathir says this was done by a Quraishite and according to Muqatil bin Suleman, some young men of the Quraish had set fire to the cathedral. Either might have happened, for Abrahah's proclamation was certainly provocative and in the ancient pre-Islamic age it cannot be impossible that an Arab, or a Quraishite youth, might have been enraged and might have defiled the cathedral, or set fire to it. But it may well also be that Abrahah himself got this done secretly by his own agent so as to have an excuse for invading Makkah and thus achieving both his objectives by destroying the Quraish and intimidating the Arabs. In any case, whatever happened, when the report reached Abrahah that the devotees of the Ka`bah had thus defiled his cathedral, he swore that he would not rest until he had destroyed the Ka`bah.

So, in 570 or 571 A. D. , he took 60, 000 troops and 13 elephants (according to another tradition, 9 elephants) and set off for Makkah. On the way, first a Yamanite chief, Dhu Nafr by name, mustering an army of the Arabs, resisted him but was defeated and taken prisoner. Then in the country of Khath'am he was opposed by Nufail bin Habib al-Khath'am, with his tribe, but he too was defeated and taken prisoner, and in order to save his life he accepted to serve him as guide in the Arab country. When he reached near Ta'if, Bani Thaqif felt that they would not be able to resist such a big force and feeling the danger lest he should destroy the temple of their deity Lat, too; their chief,

Mas'ud. came out to Abrahah with his men, and he told him that their temple was not the temple he had come to destroy. The temple He sought was in Makkah, and they would send with him a man to guide him there. Abrahah accepted the offer, and Bani Thaqif sent Abu Righal as guide with him. When they reached al-Mughammas (or al-Mughammis), a place about 3 miles short of Makkah, Abu Righal died, and the Arabs stoned his grave and the practice survives to this day. They cursed the Bani Thaqif too, for in order to save the temple of Lat they had cooperated with the invaders of the House of Allah.
According to Muhammad bin Ishaq, from al-Mughammas Abrahah sent forward his vanguard and they brought him the plunder of the people of Tihamah and Quraish, which included two hundred camels of Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace). Then, he sent an envoy of his to Makkah with the message that he had not come to fight the people of Makkah but only to destroy the House (i. e. the Ka`bah). If they offered no resistance, there would be no cause for bloodshed. Abrahah also instructed his envoy that if the people of Makkah wanted to negotiate, he should return with their leading chief to him. The leading chief of Makkah at that time was Abdul Muttalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abrahah's message. Abdul Muttalib replied: "We have no power to fight Abrahah. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House. " The envoy asked him to go with him to Abrahah. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now Abdul Muttalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when, Abrahah saw him he was much impressed; he got off his throne and sat beside him on the carpet. Then he asked him what he wanted. Abdul Muttalib replied that he wanted the king to return his camels which he had taken. Abrahah said: "I was much impressed when I saw you but your reply has brought you down in my eyes: you only demand your camels but you say nothing about this House which is your sanctuary and the sanctuary of your forefathers. " He replied: "I am the owner of my camels and am requesting you to return them. As for the House, it has its own Owner: He will defend it. " When Abrahah said that He would not be able to defend it against him, Abdul Muttalib said that that rested between Him and him. With this Abdul Muttalib left Abrahah and he restored to him his camels.
Ibn Abbaas tradition is different. It does not mention the demand for the camels at all. According to the traditions related from him by Abd bin Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Haakim, Abu Nuaim and Baihaqi, he states that when Abrahah reached As-Sifah (a place situated between Arafat and Taif in the mountains near the sacred bounds of Makkah), Abdul Muttalib went to him and said: "There was no need for you to come so far. You should have ordered us and we would have brought before you whatever you needed. " He said: "I hear that this House is the House of peace: I have come to destroy its peace. "Thereupon, Abdul Muttalib said: "This is Allah's House. He has not allowed anyone so far to dominate it. "Abrahah replied: "We will not return until we have destroyed it. "Abdul Muttalib said: "You may take whatever you like from us and return. "Abrahah refused to budge and ordered his troops to advance, leaving Abdul Muttalib behind.

Leaving the two traditions as they are, one thing which becomes evident is that the tribes living in and around Makkah did not have the power to fight such a big force and save the Ka`bah. Therefore, obviously, the Quraish did not try to put up any resistance. The Quraish on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab) had hardly been able to muster & strength numbering ten to twelve thousand men in spite of the alliance with the pagan and Jewish tribes; they could not have resisted an army 60, 000 strong.
(continued. . .)
(continuing. . . 1) : Historical Background. . . . . .
Muhammad bin Ishaq says that after returning from the camp of Abrahah Abdul Muttalib ordered the Quraish to withdraw from the city and go to the mountains along with their families for fear of a general massacre. Then he went to the Ka`bah along with some chiefs of the Quraish and taking hold of the iron ring of the door, prayed to Allah Almighty to protect His House and its keepers. There were at that time 360 idols in and around the Ka`bah, but on that critical moment they forgot them and implored only Allah for help. Their supplications which have been reported in the books of history do not contain any name but of Allah, the One. Ibn Hisham in his Life of the Prophet has cited some verses of Abdul Muttalib, which are to the following effect:
"O God, a man protects his house, so protect Your House; Let not their cross and their craft tomorrow overcome Your craft. If You will to leave them and our qiblah to themselves, You may do as You please. " Suhaill in Raud al-Unuf has cited this verse also in this connection: "Help today Your devotees against the devotees of the cross and its worshippers. " Ibn Jarir has cited Abdul Muttalib's these verses also, which he had recited in his supplication; my Lord, I do not cherish any hope from anyone against them except You. O my Lord, protect Your House from them. The enemy of this House is Your enemy. Stop them from destroying Your settlement. "
After making these supplications Abdul Muttalib and his companions also went off to the mountains. Next morning Abrahah prepared to enter Makkah, but his special elephant, Mahmud, which was in the forefront, knelt down. It was beaten with iron bars, goaded, even scarified, but it would not get up. When they made it face south, north, or east, it would immediately start off, but as soon as they directed it towards Makkah, it knelt down. In the meantime swarms of birds appeared carrying stones in their beaks and claws and showered these on the troops. Whoever was hit would start disintegrating. According to Muhammad bin Ishaq and Ikrimah, this was smallpox, which was seen in Arabia for the first time in that year. Ibn Abbas says that whoever was struck by a pebble, would start scratching his body resulting in breaking of the skin and falling off of the flesh. In another tradition Ibn Abbas says that the flesh and blood flowed like water and bones in the body became visible. The same thing happened with Abrahah too. His flesh fell in pieces and there arose bores on his body emitting pus and blood. In confusion they withdrew and fled towards Yaman. Nufail bin Habib, whom they had brought as guide from the country of Khatham, was searched out and asked to guide them back to Yaman, but he refused and said: "Now where can one flee when God pursues?

The split nose (Abrahah) is the conquered; not the conqueror. "
As they withdrew they were continually falling by the bay and dying. Ata bin Yasar says that all the troops did not perish at the spot; some perished there and others perished by the wayside as they withdrew. Abrahah died in the country of Khath'am.
This event took place at Muhassir by the Muhassab valley, between Muzdalifah and Mina. According to the Sahih of Muslim and Abu Da'ud, in the description of the Holy Prophet's farewell pilgrimage that Imam Jafar as-Sadiq has related from his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir, and he from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, he says that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) proceeded from Muzdalifah to Mina, he increased his speed in the valley of Muhassir. Imam Nawawi has explained it saying that the incident of the people of the elephant had occurred there; therefore, the pilgrims have been enjoined to pass by quickly, for Muhassir is a tormented place. Imam Malik in Muatta has related that the Holy Prophet said that the whole of Muzdalifah is a fit place for staying but one should not stay in the valley of Muhassir. In the verses of Nufail bin Habib, which Ibn Ishaq has cited, he describes this event as an eye witness;
"Would that you had seen, O Rudaina, but you would not see, What we saw by the valley of Muhassab. I praised God when I saw the birds, and I feared lest the stones should fall upon us. Everyone was asking for Nufail as though I owned the Abyssinians a debt. "
This was such a momentous event that it soon spread throughout Arabia and many poets made it the subject of their laudatory poems. In these poems one thing is quite evident that everyone regarded it as a manifestation of Allah Almighty's miraculous power, and no one, even by allusion, said that the idols which were worshipped in the Ka`bah, had anything to do with it. For example, Abdullah ibn Az-Zibara says:
"The sixty thousand returned not home, Nor did their sick man (Abrahah) survive on return. Ad and Jurham were there before them, and there is Allah, above the servants, Who sustains it. " Abu Qais bin Aslat says; "Rise and worship your Lord and annoint the Corners of the House of Allah between the Mountains of Makkah and Mina. When the help of the Owner of the Throne reached you, His armies repulsed them so that they were lying in dust, pelted with stones. "
Not only this, but according to Hadrat Umm Hani and Hadrat Zubair bin al-Awwam, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The Quraish did not worship anyone but Allah, the Only and One, for ten years (and according to others, for seven years. Umm Hani's tradition has been related by Imam Bukhari in his History and by Tabarani, Haakim, Ibn Marduyah and Baihaqi in their collections of Ahadith. Hadrat Zubair's statement has been related by Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah and Ibn Asakir, and this is further confirmed by the mursal tradition of Hadrat Sa`eed bin al Musayyab, which Khatib Baghdadi has recorded in his History.
The Arabs describe the year in which this event took place as Am al-Feel (the year of the elephants), and in the same year the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was born. The traditionists and historians almost unanimously state that the event of the people of the elephant had occurred in Muharram and the Holy Prophet was

born in Rabi al-Awwal. A majority of them states that he took birth 50 days after the event of the elephant.

Theme and Substance

If Surah al-Feel is studied in the light of the historical details as given above, one can fully well understand why in this Surah only Allah's inflicting His punishment on the people of the elephant has been referred and described so briefly. It was an event of recent occurrence, and everyone in Makkah and Arabia was fully aware of it. The Arabs believed that the Ka`bah had been protected in this invasion not by any god or goddess but by Allah Almighty Himself. Then Allah alone had been invoked by the Quraish chiefs for help, and for quite a few years the people of Quraish having been impressed by this event, had worshipped none but Allah. Therefore, there was no need to mention the details in Surah al-Feel, but only a reference to it was enough so that the people of Quraish, in particular, and the people of Arabia, in general, should consider well in their hearts the message that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was giving. For the only message that he gave was that they should worship and serve none but Allah, the Only and One. Then, they should also consider that if they used force to suppress this invitation to the truth, they would only be inviting the wrath of God, Who had so completely routed and destroyed the people of the elephants.

106. Quraish:

Name

The Surah has been so entitled after the word Quraish in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Dahhak and Kalbi regard it as a Madani Surah, yet a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it is Makki, and a manifest evidence of this are the words Rabba hadh-al-Bait (Lord of this House) of this Surah itself. Had it been revealed at Madinah, the words "this House" for the Ka`bah could not be relevant. Moreover, its subject matter so closely relates to that of Surah Al-Feel that probably it was revealed immediately after it, without any other Surah intervening between them. On the basis of this very relevance, some of the earliest scholars regard the two Surahs as one entity. This view is strengthened by the traditions which say that in the Qur'an copy belonging to Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka`b these two were written as one Surah, i. e. without the insertion of the Bismillah between them. Furthermore, Hadrat Umar had once recited the two Surahs as one in the Prayer. But this view is not acceptable because in the Qur'an copy which Hadrat Uthman (may Allah bless him) had got written down officially by the cooperation of a large number of the Companions and sent to the centers of Islamic lands, the Bismillah was written between these two Surahs, and since then these two have been written as separate Surahs in all the copies of the Qur'an everywhere in the world. Moreover, the style of the two Surahs is so different that they manifestly appear as two separate Surahs.

Historical Background

To understand the Surah well it is essential that one should keep the historical background relevant to the contents of this Surah and of Surah Al-Feel in view.
The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Hijaz until the time of Qusayy bin Kilab, the ancestor of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First of all, Qusayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Ka`bah. On that very basis Qusayy was called mujammi (uniter, assembler) by his people.
This man by his sagacity and wisdom founded a city state in Makkah and made excellent arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia, with the result that the Quraish were able to gain great influence among the Arabian tribes and lands. After Qusayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, Abdi Manaf and Abd ad-Dar, but of the two Abdi Manaf gained greater fame even during his father's lifetime and was held in high esteem throughout Arabia.
Abdi Manaf had four sons: Hashim, Abdi Shams, Al-Muttalib, and Naufal. Of these Hashim, father of Abdul Muttalib and grandfather of the Holy Prophet, first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia, and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the merchants living in the interior of the country were attracted to the, market of Makkah.
This was the time when the Sasanian kingdom of Iran had captured the international trade that was carried out between the northern lands and the eastern countries and Byzantine empire through the Persian Gulf. This had boosted up the trade activity on the trade route leading from southern Arabia to Syria and Egypt along the Red Sea coast.
As against the other Arabian caravans, the Quraish had the advantage that the tribes on the route held them in high esteem on account off their being keepers of the Ka`bah. They stood indebted to them for the great generosity with which the Quraish treated them in the Hajj season. That is why the Quraish felt no fear that their caravans would be robbed or harmed any where on the way. The tribes on the way did not even charge them the heavy transit taxes that they demanded from the other caravans.
Hashim taking advantage of this prepared the trade scheme and made his three brothers partners in it. Thus, Hashim obtained trade privileges from the Ghassanide king of Syria, Abdi Shams from the Negus, Al-Muttalib from the Yamanite nobles and Naufal from the governments of Iraq and Iran, and their trade began to flourish. That is how the four brothers became famous as traders and began to be called ashab al-ilaf (generators of love and affection) on account of their friendly relations with the tribes and states of the surrounding lands.
Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match and equal them. As regards wealth and worldly goods they became the most affluent tribe, and Makkah became the most important commercial center of the Arabian peninsula. Another great advantage that accrued from

these international relations was that they brought from Iraq tile script which later was used for writing down the Qur'an. No other Arabian tribe could boast of so many literate people as Quraish. For these very reasons the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Quraish are the leaders of men. " (Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyat Amr bin al As). And according to a tradition from Hadrat Ali in Baihaqi, the Holy Prophet said: "First the leadership of the Arabians was in the hands of the people of Himyar, then Allah withdrew it from them and gave it to Quraish"

The Quraish were thus prospering and flourishing when the event of Abrahah's invasion of Makkah took place. Had Abrahah at that time succeeded in taking this holy City and destroying the Ka`bah, the glory and renown of not only the Quraish but of the Ka`bah itself, would have faded away, the belief of the pre-Islamic Arabia that the House indeed was Allah's House would have been shattered, and the high esteem in which Quraish were held for being keepers of the House throughout the country would have been tarnished. Then, after the Abyssinian advance to Makkah, the Byzantium also would have taken the initiative to gain control over the trade route between Syria and Makkah: and the Quraish would have been reduced to a plight worse than that in which they were involved before Qusayy bin Kilab. But when Allah showed this manifestation of His power that the swarms of birds destroyed 60, 000 Abyssinian troops brought by Abrahah by pelting then, with stones, and from Makkah to Yaman they went on falling and dying by the wayside, the faith of the Arabs that the Ka`bah indeed was Allah's House increased manifold, and the glory and renown of Quraish too was enhanced considerably throughout the country. Now the Arabs were convinced that they were under Allah's special favor; therefore, they visited every part of Arabia fearlessly and passed through every land with their trade caravans unharmed. No one could dare touch them with an evil intention. Not to speak of touching them, even if they had a non-Quraishite under their protection, he too was allowed to pass unharmed.

Theme and Substance

As all this was well known in the time of the Holy Prophet's appointment to Prophethood, there was no need to mention them. That is why in the four brief sentences of this Surah, Quraish were simply asked to consider: "When you yourselves acknowledge this House (i. e. the Ka`bah) to be Allah's House, and not of the idols, and when you fully well know that it is Allah alone Who has granted you peace by virtue of this House, made your trade and commerce flourish and saving you from destitution favored you with prosperity you should then worship and serve Him alone! "

107. Ma`uun:

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word al-ma`uun occurring at the end of the last verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Marduyah has cited Ibn Abbas (may Allah bless them both) as saying that this Surah is Makki, and the same also is the view of Ata and Jabir. But Abu Hayyan in Al-

Bahr al-Muhit has cited Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Dahhak as saying that this Surah was revealed at Madinah. In our opinion there is an internal piece of evidence in the Surah itself which points to its being a Madani Revelation. It holds out a threat of destruction to those praying ones who are unmindful of their Prayers and who pray only to be seen. This kind of hypocrites were found only at Madinah, for it was there that Islam and the Muslims gained such strength that Islam and the Muslims gained such strength that many people were compelled to believe from expedience, had to visit the Mosque, join the congregational Prayer and prayed only to be seen of others, so as to be counted among Muslims. Contrary to this is, at Makkah conditions were altogether different. No one had to pray to be seen. There it was difficult even for the believers to pray in congregation; they prayed secretly and if a person prayed openly he did so only at the risk of his life. This kind of hypocrites found in Makkah did not comprise those who believed and Prayed to be seen but those who in their hearts had know, and acknowledged the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) to be on the true path, but were avoiding to accept Islam in order to maintain their Position of leadership and authority, or were not prepared to take the risk of being afflicted with the kind of hardships with which they found the believers afflicted in the society around them. This condition of the hypocrites at Makkah has been described in vv. 10-11 of Surah Al-Ankabut.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to point out what kind of morals a man develops when he refuses to believe in the Hereafter. In vv 2-3 the condition of the disbelievers who openly belie the Hereafter has been described, and in the last four verses the state of those hypocrites who apparently are Muslims but have no idea of the Hereafter, its judgment, and the meting out of rewards and punishments accordingly has been described. On the whole, tie object of depicting the attitude and conduct of two kinds of people is to impress the point that man cannot develop a strong, stable and pure character in himself unless he believes in the Hereafter

108. Kauthar:

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word al-kauthar occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Marduyah has cited Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Hadrat Abdullah bin az-Zubair and Hadrat Aishah as saying that this Surah is Makki. Kalbi and Muqatil also regard it as Makki, and the same is the view held by the majority of commentators. But Hadrat Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Mujaahid and Qatadah regard it as Madani. Imam Suyuti in Al-Itqan has confirmed this same view, and Imam Nawawi in his commentary of the Sahih of Muslim has also preferred the same. The reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi and others have related from Hadrat Anas bin Malik, saying: "The Holy Prophet was among us. In the meantime he dozed;

then he raised his head, smiling, according to some traditions, the people asked what for he was smiling, according to others, he himself told them that a Surah had just been revealed to him. Then, with Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim, he recited Surah Al-Kauthar; then he asked the people whether they knew what Kauthar was. When they said that Allah and his Messenger had the best knowledge, he said; It is a river which my Lord has granted me in Paradise. " (The details follow under "Kauthar"). The basis of the reasoning from this tradition for this Surah's being Madani is that Hadrat Anas belonged to Madinah, and his saying that this Surah was revealed in his presence is a proof that it was Madani.

But, in the first place, from this same Hadrat Anas, Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Jarir have related the traditions which say that this river of Paradise (Al-Kauthar) had been shown to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the occasion of the mi`raaj (ascension) and everyone knows that mi`raaj had taken place at Makkah before the hijrah.

Secondly, when during the mi`raaj the Holy Prophet had not only been informed of this gift of Allah Almighty but also shown it, there was no reason why Surah Al-Kauthar should have be revealed at Madinah to give him the good news of it.

Thirdly, if in an assembly of the Companions the Holy Prophet himself had given the news of the revelation of Surah Al-Kauthar which Hadrat Anas has mentioned in his tradition, and it meant that that Surah had been revealed for the first time then, it was not possible that well-informed Companions like Hadrat Aishah, Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas and Hadrat Abdullah bin Zubair should have declared this Surah to be a Makki revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makki.

If the matter is considered carefully, there appears to be a flaw in the tradition from Hadrat Anas in that it does not say what was the subject under discussion in the assembly in which the Holy Prophet gave the news about Surah Al-Kauthar.

It is possible that at that time the Holy Prophet was explaining something. In the meantime he was informed by revelation that that point was further explained by Surah Al-Kauthar, and he mentioned the same thing, saying that that Surah was revealed to him just then. Such incidents did take place on several occasions, on the basis of which the commentators have opined about certain verses that they were revealed twice.

This second revelation, in fact, meant that the verse had been revealed earlier, but on some later occasion the Holy Prophet's attention was invited to it by revelation for the second time. In such traditions, the mention of the revelation of a certain verse is not enough to decide whether it was revealed at Makkah or Madinah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Hadrat Anas not been there to cause doubt, the whole content of the Surah Al-Kauthar by itself bears evidence that it was revealed at Makkah, and in the period when the Holy Prophet was passing through extremely discouraging conditions.

Historical Background

Before this in Surahs Ad-Duhaa and Alam Nashrah we have seen that when in the earliest phase of Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was passing

through the most trying conditions when the whole nation had turned hostile, there was resistance and opposition on every side, and the Holy Prophet and a handful of his Companions did not see any remote chance of success. Allah in order to console and encourage him at that time had sent down several verses. In Surah Ad-Duhaa it was said: "And surely the later period (i. e. every later period) is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased". In Surah Alam Nashrah: "And We exalted your renown for you. "That is, "Though the enemies are trying to defame you throughout the country, We, on the contrary, have arranged to exalt your name and fame. "And: "The fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. "That is, "You should not be disheartened by the severity of conditions at this time; this period of hardships will soon pass, and the period of success and victory will follow. "

Such were the conditions in which Allah by sending down Surah Al-Kauthar consoled the Holy Prophet as well as foretold the destruction of his opponents. The disbelieving Quraish said: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is cut off from his community and reduced to a powerless and helpless individual.

According to Ikrimah when the Holy Prophet was appointed a Prophet, and he began to call the people to Islam, the Quraish said: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is cut off from his people as a tree is cut off from its root, which might fall to the ground any moment. " (Ibn Jarir).

Muhammad bin Is-haaq says: "Whenever the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was mentioned before As bin Wa'il as-Sehmi, the chief of Makkah, he used to say: Let him alone for he is only a childless man (abtar) with no male offspring. When he dies, there will be no one to remember him.

Shamir bin Atiyyah says that Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, also used to say similar things about the Holy Prophet, (Ibn Jarir).

According to Ibn Abbas, once Ka`b bin Ashraf (the Jewish chief of Madinah) came to Makkah and the Quraish chiefs said to him: "Just see this boy, who is cut off from his people; he thinks he is superior to us, whereas we manage the Hajj, look after the Ka`bah and water the pilgrims. " (Bazzaar). Concerning this very incident Ikrimah reports that the Quraishad used the words as-sunbur al-munbatir min qaumi-hi (a weak, helpless and childless man who is cut off from his people) for the Holy Prophet.

(Ibn Jarir) Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Asakir have related that Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas said: "The eldest son of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was Qasim; next to him was Zainab, next to her Hadrat Abdullah and next to him three daughters, viz. Umm Kulthum, Fatimah and Ruqayyah. Of them first Hadrat Qasim died and then Hadrat Abdullah. Thereupon As bin Wail said: "His line has come to an end: now he is abtar (i. e. cut of from root). " Some traditions add that As said "Muhammad is abtar: he has no son to succeed him. When he dies, his memory will perish and you will be rid of him.

The tradition from Ibn Abbas, which Abd bin Humaid has related, shows that Abu Jahl also had said similar words on the death of the Holy Prophet's son, Abdullah.

Ibn Abi Hatim has related on the authority of Shmir bin Atiyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait by rejoicing at this bereavement of the Holy Prophet. Ata says that when the second son of the Holy Prophet died, his own uncle, Abu Lahab (whose house was next to his) hastened to the pagans and gave them the "good news": Batira Muhammadun al-laila: "Muhammad has become childless this night, or he is cut off from root: ",

Such were the disturbing conditions under which Surah Al-Kauthar was sent down. The Quraish were angry with him because he worshipped and served only Allah and repudiated their idolatry publicly. For this very reason he was deprived of the rank, esteem and honor that he enjoyed among his people before Prophethood and was now as cut off from his community. The handful of his Companions also were helpless, poor people who were being persecuted and tyrannized. Furthermore, he was bereaved by the death of two sons, one after the other, whereat the near relatives and the people of his clan, brotherhood and neighborhood were rejoicing and uttering such words as were disheartening and disturbing for a noble person who had treated even his enemies most kindly. At this Allah just in one sentence of this brief Surah gave him the good news, better news than which has never been given to any man in the world, besides the decision that it will be his opponents who will be cut off from their root and not he.

109. Kaafiroon:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-kaafiroon occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Hadrat Hasan Basri and Ikrimah, say that this Surah, is Makki, while Hadrat Abdullah bin Zubair says that it is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas and Qatadah, first that it is Makki, and second that it is Madani. However, according to the majority of commentators, it is a Makki Surah, and its subject-matter itself points to its being a Makki revelation.

Historical Background

There was a time in Makkah when although a storm of opposition had arisen in the pagan society of Quraish against the message of Islam preached by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), yet the Quraish chiefs hall not yet lost hope that they would reach some sort of a compromise with him. Therefore, from time to time they would visit him with different proposals of compromise so that he accepted one of them and the dispute between them was brought to an end. In this connection, different traditions have been related in the Hadith.

According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, the Quraish proposed to the Holy Prophet; "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man of Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are prepared to follow and obey you as our leader, only on the condition that you will not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, we present another proposal which is to your as well as to our advantage. "When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, they said that if he would

worship their gods, Lat and Uzza, for a year, they would worship his God for the same space of time. The Holy Prophet said: "Wait awhile; let me see what my Lord commands in this regard. "Thereupon the revelation came down: Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun. . . and: Qul afa-ghair Allahi. . . (Az-Zumar: 64) : "Say to them: ignorant people do you bid me to worship others than Allah? " (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani). According to another tradition from Ibn Abbas, the Quraish said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muhammad, if you kiss our gods, the idols, we shall worship your God. "Thereupon, this Surah was sent down. (Abd bin Humaid).

Said bin Mina (the freed slave of Abul Bakhtari) has related that Walid bin Mughirah, As bin Wail, Aswad bin al-Muttalib and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said to him: "O Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), let us agree that we would worship your God and you would worship our gods, and we would make you a partner in all our works. If what you have brought was better than what we possess, we would be partners in it with You, and have our share in it, and if what we possess is better than what you have brought, you would be partner in it with us and have your share of it. "At this Allah sent down: Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Hisham also has related this incident in the Sirah).

Wahb bin Munabbih has related that the people of Quraish said to Allah's' Messenger: "If you like we would enter your faith for a year and you would enter our faith for a year. " (Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Abi Hatim).

These traditions show that the Quraish had proposed such things to the Holy Prophet not once, in one sitting, but at different times and on different occasions; and there was need that they should be given a definite, decisive reply so that their hope that he would come to terms with them on the principle of "give and take" was frustrated for ever.

Theme and Subject Matter

If the Surah is read with this background in mind, one finds that it was not revealed to preach religious tolerance as some people of today seem to think, but it was revealed in order to exonerate the Muslims from the disbelievers religion, their rites of worship, and their gods, and to express their total disgust and unconcern with them and to tell them that Islam and kufr (unbelief) had nothing in common and there was no possibility of their being combined and mixed into one entity. Although it was addressed in the beginning to the disbelieving Quraish in response to their proposals of compromise, yet it is not confined to them only, but having made it a part of the Qur'an, Allah gave the Muslims the eternal teaching that they should exonerate themselves by word and deed from the creed of kufr wherever and in whatever form it be, and should declare without any reservation that they cannot make any compromise with the disbelievers in the matter of Faith. That is why this Surah continued to be recited when the people to whom it was addressed as a rejoinder, had died and been forgotten, and those Muslims also continued to recite it who were disbelievers at the time it was revealed, and the Muslims still recite it centuries after they have passed away, for expression of disgust with and dissociation from kufr and its rites is a perpetual demand of Faith.

As for the esteem in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) held this Surah, it can be judged from the following few ahadith:

Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that on many an occasion he heard the Holy Prophet recite Surahs Qul Yaa-ayyuhal-kafirun and Qul Huwu-Allahu ahad in the two rak`ahs before the Fajr obligatory Prayer and in the two rak`ahs after the Maghrib obligatory Prayer. Several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording have been related by Imam Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Marduyah from Ibn Umar.

Hadrat Khabbab says: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to me: when you lie down in bed to sleep, recite Qul ya-ayyuhal kafirun, and this was the Holy Prophet's own practice also; when he lay down to sleep, he recited this Surah. " (Bazzaar, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah).

According to Ibn Abbas, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to the people: "Should I tell you the word which will protect you from polytheism? It is that you should recite Qul ya-ayyuhal kafirun when you go to bed. " (Abu Ya`la, Tabarani).

Hadrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said to Hadrat Mu'adh bin Jabal; "Recite Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun at the time you go to bed, for this is immunity from polytheism. " (Baihaqi in Ash-Shu'ab).

Both Fardah bin Naufal and Abdur Rahman bin Naufal have stated that their father, Naufal bin Mu`awiyah al-Ashjai, said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) : "Teach me something which I may recite at the time I go to bed. "The Holy Prophet replied: "Recite Qul ya-ayyuhal kafirun to the end and then sleep, for this is immunity from polytheism. " (Musnad Ahmad, Aba Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Haakim, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in Ash-Shu`ab). A similar request was made by Hadrat Jabalah bin Harithah, brother of Hadrat Said bin Harithah, to the Holy Prophet and to him also he gave the same reply. (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani).

110. Nasr:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word nasr occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas states that this is the last Surah of the Qur'an to be revealed, i. e. no complete Surah was sent down to the Holy Prophet after it. (Muslim Nasai, Tabarani, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn Marduyah). According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar, this Surah was sent down on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage in the middle of the Tashriq Days at Mina, and after it the Holy Prophet rode his she camel and gave his well known Sermon. (Tirmidhi, Bazzaar, Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Ya`la, Ibn Marduyah). Baihaqi in Kilab al-Hajj has related from the tradition of Hadrat Sarra bint-Nabhan the Sermon which the Holy Prophet gave on this occasion. She says: "At the Farewell Pilgrimage I heard the Holy Prophet say: O people, do you know what day it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is the middle day of the Tashriq Days. Then he said: Do you know what place

it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is Mash`aril-Haraam. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here again. Beware, your bloods and your honors are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and He questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: have I conveyed the message to you? Then, when we returned to Madinah, the Holy Prophet passed away not many days after that. "

If both these traditions are read together, it appears that there was an interval of three months and some days between the revelation of Surah An-Nasr and the Holy Prophet's death, for historically the same was the interval between the Farewell Pilgrimage and the passing away of the Holy Prophet.

Ibn Abbas says that when this Surah was revealed, the Holy Prophet said that he had been informed of his death and his time had approached. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah). In the other traditions related from Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, it has been stated that at the revelation of this Surah the Holy Prophet understood that he had been informed of his departure from the world. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Nasai, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

Mother of the Believers, Hadrat Umm Habibah, says that when this Surah was revealed the Holy Prophet said that he would leave the world that year. Hearing this Hadrat Fatimah wept. Thereat he said: "From among my family you will be the first to join me. "Hearing this she laughed. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqi from Ibn Abbas.

Ibn Abbas says: "Hadrat Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly Companions who had fought at Badr. This was not liked by some of them. They complained that they also had sons who were like the boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly? (Imam Bukhari and Ibn Jarir have pointed out that such a thing was said by Hadrat Abdur Rahman bin `Auf). Hadrat Umar said that the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day he invited the Companions of Badr and called me also to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to the assembly to prove his contention. During the conversation Hadrat Umar asked the Companions of Badr: "What do you say about Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fath? "Some said: "In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succour comes and we attain victory. "Some others said that it implied the conquest of cities and forts. Some kept quiet. Then Hadrat Umar said: "Ibn Abbas, do you also say the same? "I said no. He asked: "What then is your view? "I submitted that it implied the last hour of Allah's Messenger (upon whom be peace); in it he was informed `that when Allah's succour came and victory was attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come; therefore, he, should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Thereat Hadrat Umar said "I know nought but what you have said. "In another tradition there is the addition that, Hadrat Umar said to the Companions: "How can you blame me when you yourselves have seen why I invite this boy to join the assembly? " (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah, Baghawi, Baihaqi, Ibn al-Mundhir).

Theme and Subject Matter

As is shown by the above traditions, Allah in this Surah had informed His Messenger (upon whom be peace) that when Islam attained complete victory in Arabia and the people started entering Allah's religion in great numbers, it would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to the world, had been fulfilled. Then, he was enjoined to busy himself in praising and glorifying Allah by Whose bounty he had been able to accomplish such a great task, and should implore Him to forgive whatever failings and frailties he might have shown in the performance of the service. Here, by a little consideration one can easily see the great difference that there is between a Prophet and a common worldly leader. If a worldly leader in his own lifetime is able to bring about a revolution, which has the aim and objective of his struggle, this would be an occasion for exultation for him. But here we witness quite another phenomenon. The Messenger of Allah in a brief space of 23 years revolutionized an entire nation as regards its beliefs, thoughts, customs, morals, civilization, ways of living, economy, politics and fighting ability, and raising it from ignorance and barbarism enabled it to conquer the world and become leader of nations; yet when he had accomplished this unique task, he was not enjoined to celebrate it but to glorify and praise Allah and to pray for His forgiveness, and he busied himself humbly the implementation of that command.

Hadrat Aishah says: "The Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) often used to recite Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika astaghfiruka wa atubu ilaika (according to some other traditions, Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdi-hi as-taghfirullaha wa atubu ilaihi) before liis death. I asked: O Messenger of Allah, what are these words that you have started reciting now? He replied: A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words, and it is: Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fathu. " (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah). In some other traditions on the same subject Hadrat Aishah has reported that the Holy Prophet often recited the following words in his ruku and sajdah: Subhanak-Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli. This was the interpretation of the Qur'an (i. e. of Surah An-Nasr) that he had made. (Bukhari, Muslim Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir).

Hadrat Urnm Salamah says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during his last days very often recited the following words sitting and standing, going out of the house and coming back to it: Subhan Allahi wa-bi hamdi-hi. I one day asked: "Why do you recite these words so often? O Messenger of Allah". He replied: I have been enjoined to do so. Then he recited this Surah. " (Ibn Jarir).

According to Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud, when this Surah was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) frequently began to recite the words Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, subhanaka Rabbana wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, innaka anta at-Tawwab al-Ghafur. (Ibn Jarir, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Hatim).

Ibn Abbas has stated that after the revelation of this Surah the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) began to labor so intensively and devotedly hard for the Hereafter as he had never done before.

111. Lahab:

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word Lahab in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although the commentators have not disputed its being a Makki Surah, yet it is difficult to determine in which phase of the life at Makkah precisely it was revealed. However, in view of Abu Lahab's role and conduct against the Holy Prophet's message of Truth, it can be assumed that it must have been revealed in the period when he had transgressed all limits in his mad hostility to him, and his attitude was becoming a serious obstruction in the progress of Islam. It may well have been revealed in the period when the Quraish had boycotted the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) together with the people of his clan and besieged them in Shi'b Abi Talib, and Abu Lahab was the only person to join with the enemies against his own relatives. The basis of this assumption is that Abu Lahab was the Holy Prophet's uncle, and public condemnation of the uncle by the tongue of the nephew could not be proper until the extreme excesses committed by the uncle had become visible to everyone. If the Surah had been revealed before this, in the very beginning, the people would have regarded it as morally discourteous that the nephew should so condemn the uncle.

Background

This is the only place in the Qur'an where a person from among the enemies of Islam has been condemned by name, whereas in Makkah as well as in Madinah, after the migration, there were many people who were in no way less inimical to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) than Abu Lahab. The question is, what was the special trait of the character of this person, which became the basis of this condemnation by name? To understand that it is necessary that one should understand the Arabian society of that time and the role that Abu Lahab played in it.

In ancient days since there prevailed chaos and confusion, bloodshed and plunder throughout Arabia, and the condition since centuries was that a person could have no guarantee of the protection of life, honor and property except with the help and support of his clansmen and blood relations, therefore silah rehmi (good treatment of the kindred) was esteemed most highly among the moral values of the Arabian society and breaking off of connections with the kindred was regarded as a great sin. Under, the influence of the same Arabian tradition when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, the other clans of Quraish and their chiefs resisted and opposed him tooth and nail, but the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib (children of al-Muttalib, brother of Hashim) not only did not oppose him but continued to support him openly, although most, of them had not yet believed in his Prophethood. The other clans of Quraish themselves regarded this support by the blood relations of the Holy Prophet as perfectly in accordance with the moral traditions of Arabia. That is why they never taunted the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib in that they had abandoned their ancestral faith by supporting a person who was preaching a new faith. They knew and believed that they could in no case hand over an individual of their clan

to his enemies, and their support and aid of a clansman was perfectly natural in the sight of the Quraish and the people of Arabia.
This moral principle, which the Arabs even in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, regarded as worthy of respect and inviolable was broken only by one man in his enmity of Islam, and that was Abu Lahab, son of Abdul Muttalib. He was an uncle of the Holy Prophet, whose father and he were sons of the same father. In Arabia, an uncle represented the father especially when the nephew was fatherless. The uncle was expected to look after the nephew as one of his own children. But this man in his hostility to Islam and love of kufr trampled all the Arab traditions under foot.
The traditionists have related from Ibn Abbas with several chains of transmitters the tradition that when the Holy Prophet was commanded to present the message of Islam openly, and he was instructed in the Qur'an to warn first of all his nearest kinsfolk of the punishment of God, he ascended the Mount, Safa one morning and called out aloud: Yaa sabahah (O, the calamity of the morning!). This alarm in Arabia was raised by the person who noticed early at dawn an enemy tribe advancing against his tribe. When the Holy Messenger made this call, the people enquired as to who had made the cail. They were told that it was Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Thereat the people of all the clans of Quraish rushed out. Everyone who could, came; he who could not, sent another one for himself. When the People had assembled, the Holy Messenger calling out each clan by name, viz. O Bani Hashim, O Bani Abdul Muttalib, O Bani Fihr, O Bani so and so, said: "If I were to tell you that behind the hill there was an enemy host ready to fall upon you, would you believe me? "The people responded with one voice, saying that they never had so far experienced a lie from him. The Holy Prophet said: "Then I warn you that you are heading for a torment. " Thereupon, before anyone else could speak, Abu Lahab, the Holy Prophet's uncle, said: "May you perish! Did you summon us for this? "Another tradition adds that he picked up a stone to throw at the Holy Prophet. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, and others).
According to Ibn Zaid, one day Abu Lahab asked the Holy Prophet: "lf I were to accept your religion, what would I get? " The Holy Prophet replied: "You would get what the other believers would get. " He said: "Is there no preference or distinction for me? " The Holy Prophet replied: "What else do you want? " Thereupon he said: "May this religion perish in which I and all other people should be equal and alike! " (Ibn Jarir).
In Makkah Abu Lahab was the next door neighbor of the Holy Prophet. Their houses were separated by a wall. Besides him, Hakam bin As (Father of Marwan), Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Adi bin Hamra and Ibn al-Asda il-Hudhali also were his neighbors. These people did not allow him to have peace even in his own house. Sometimes when he was performing the Prayer, they would place the goat's stomach on him; sometimes when food was being cooked in the courtyard, they would throw filth at the cooking pot. The Holy Prophet would come out and say: "O Bani Abdi Manaf, what kind of neighborliness is it? "Abu Lahab's wife, Umm Jamil (Abu Sufyan's sister), had made it a practice to cast thorns at his door in the night so that when he or his children came out

of the house at dawn, they should run thorns in the foot. (Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Asakir, Ibn Hisham).

Before the proclamation of Prophethood, two of the Holy Prophet's daughters were married to two of Abu Lahab's sons, Utbah and Utaibah. After his call when the Holy Prophet began to invite the people to Islam, Abu Lahab said to both his sons: "I would forbid myself seeing and meeting you until you divorced the daughters of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). "So, both of them divorced their, wives. Utaibah in particular became so nasty in his spitefulness that one day he came before the Holy Prophet and said: "I repudiate An-najmi idha hawa and Alladhi dana fatadalla" and then he spat at him, but his spittal did not fall on him. The Holy Prophet prayed: "O God, subject him to the power of a dog from among Your dogs. "Afterwards, Utaibah accompanied his father in his journey to Syria. During the journey the caravan halted at a place which, according to local people, was visited by wild beasts at night. Abu Lahab told his companions, the Quraish: "Make full arrangements for the protection of my son, for I fear the curse invoked by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on him. " Accordingly, the people made their camels sit all around Utaibah and went to sleep. At night a tiger came which crossed the circle of the camels and devoured Utaibah tearing him to pieces. (Ibn Abdul Barr: Al-Istiab; Ibn Hajar: Al-Isabah; Abu Nuaim al-Isfahani: Dalail an-Nubuwwat; As-Suhaili: Raud al-Unuf. Here there is a difference of opinion. Some reporters say that the divorce took place after the Holy Prophet's proclamation of Prophethood and some say that it took place after the revelation of Tabbat yada Abi Lahab. There is also a difference of opinion about whether Abu Lahab's this son was Utbah or Utaibah. But this much is confirmed that after the conquest of Makkah, Utbah embraced Islam and took the oath of allegiance at the Holy Prophet's hand. Therefore, the correct view is that it was Utaibah).

Abu Lahab's wickedness can be judged from the fact that when after the death of the Holy Prophet's son Hadrat Qasim, his second son, Hadrat Abdullah, also died, this man instead of condoning with his nephew in his bereavement, hastened to the Quraish chiefs joyfully to give them the news that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had become childless that night. This we have already related in the commentary of Surah Al-Kauthar.

Wherever the Holy Prophet went to preach his message of Islam, this man followed him and forbade the people to listen to him. Rabiah bin Abbad ad-Dill has related: "I was a young boy when I accompanied my father to the face of Dhul-Majaz. There I saw the Holy Messenger (may peace be upon him) who was exhorting the people, saying: 'O people, say: there is no deity but Allah, you will attain success. 'Following behind him I saw a man, who was telling the people; `This fellow is a liar: he has gone astray from his ancestral faith. ' I asked; who is he? The people replied: He is his uncle, Abu Lahab. " (Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqi). Another tradition from Hadrat Rabiah is to the effect; "I saw that the Holy Prophet went to the halting place of each tribe and said: `O children of so and so, I have been appointed Allah's Messenger to you. I exhort you to worship only Allah and to associate none with Him. So, affirm faith in me and join me so that I

may fulfill the mission for which I have been sent. 'Following close behind him there was a man who was saying: `O children of so and so, he is leading you astray from Lat and Uzza and inviting you to the religion of error and innovation which he has brought. Do not at all listen to what he says and do not follow him. ' I asked my father: who is he? He replied: he is his uncle, Abu Lahab. " (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani). Tariq bin Abdullah al-Muharibi's tradition is similar. He says: "I saw in the fare of Dhul-Majaz that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) was exhorting the people, saying: `O people, say La ilaha ill-Allah, you will attain success', and behind him there was a man who was casting stones at him, until his heels bled, and he was telling the people: 'Do not listen to him, he is a liar. ' I asked the people who he was. They said he was his uncle, Abu Lahab. " (Tirmidhi).

In the 7th year of Prophethood, when all the clans of Quraish boycotted the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib socially and economically, and both these clans remaining steadfast to the Holy Prophet's support, were besieged in Shib Abi Talib, Abu Lahab was the only person, who sided with the disbelieving Quraish against his own clan. This boycott continued for three years, so much so that the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib began to starve. This, however, did not move Abu Lahab. When a trade caravan came to Makkah and a besieged person from Shib Abi Talib approached it to buy some article of food, Abu Lahab would shout out to the merchants to demand a forbidding price, telling them that he would make up for any loss that they incurred. Thus, they would demand exorbitant rates and the poor customer had to return empty handed to his starving children. Then Abu Lahab would purchase the same articles from them at the market rates. (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham).

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Background. . . . . .

On account of these very misdeeds this man was condemned in this Surah by name, and there was a special need for it. When the Holy Prophet's own uncle followed and opposed him before the Arabs who came for hajj from outside Makkah, or gathered together in the fares held at different places, they regarded it as against the established traditions of Arabia that an uncle should run down his nephew without a reason, should pelt stones at him and bring false accusations against him publicly. They were, therefore, influenced by what Aba Lahab said and were involved in doubt about the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But when this, Surah was revealed, and Abu Lahab, filled with rage, started uttering nonsense, the people realized that what he said in opposition to the Holy Prophet was not at all reliable, for he said all that in his mad hostility to his nephew.

Besides, when his uncle was condemned by name, the people's expectation that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) could treat some relative leniently in the matter of religion was frustrated for ever. When the Holy Messenger's own uncle was taken to task publicly the people understood that there was no room for preference or partiality in their faith. A non-relative could become a near and dear one if he believed, and a near

relation a non-relative if he disbelieved. Thus, there is no place for the ties of blood in religion.

112. Ikhlaas:

Name

Al-Ikhlas is not merely the name of this Surah but also the title of its contents, for it deals exclusively with Tauhid. The other Surahs of the Qur'an generally have been designated after a word occurring in them, but in this Surah the word Ikhlas has ccurred nowhere. It has been given this name in view of its meaning and subject matter. Whoever understands it and believes in its teaching, will get rid of shirk (polytheism) completely.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani Surah is disputed, and the difference of opinion has been caused by the traditions which have been related concerning the occasion of its revelation. We give them below ad seriatum:

(1) Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Quraish said to the Holy Prophed (upon whom be be peace) : "Tell us of the ancestry of your Lord. "Thereupon this Surah was sent down. (Tabarani).

(2) Abul Aliyah has related on the authority of Hadrat Ubayy bin Kab that the polytheists said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) : Tell us of your Lord's ancestry. "Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Harim, Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, Bukhari in At-Tarikh, Ibn al-Mundhir, Haakim, Baihaqi). Tirmidhi has related a tradition on the same theme from Abul Aliyah, which does not contain any reference to Hadrat Ubayy bin Kab, and has declared it to be more authentic.

(3) Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah has stated that a bedouin (according to other traditions, some people) said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) : "Tell us of your Lord's ancestry. "Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Abu Yala, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani in Al-Ausat, Baihaqi, Abu Nuaim in Al-Hilyah).

(4) Ikrimah has related a tradition form Ibn Abbas, saying that a group of the Jews, including Kab bin Ashraf, Huyayy bin Akhtab and other, came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said: "O Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), tell us of the attributes of your Lord, Who has sent you as a Prophet. "Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Adi, Baihaqi in Al-Asma was-Sifat).

In addition to these, some other traditions also have been cited by Ibn Taimiyyali in his commentary of Surah Al-Ikhlas, which are as follows;

(5) Hadrat Anas has stated that some Jews of Khaiber came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and they said: "O Abul Qasim, Allah created the angels from light, Adam from rotten clay, Iblis from the flame of fire, the sky from smoke, and the earth from the foam of water. Now tell us about your Lord (of what He is made). "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not give any reply to this question. Then Gabriel came and he said: "O Muhammad, say to them: Huwa Allahu ahad. "

(6) Amir bin at-Tufail said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muhammad, what do you call us to? "The Holy Prophet replied: "To Allah. "Amir said: "Then, tell us of what He is made, whether of gold, silver, or iron? " Thereupon this surah was sent down.
(7) Dahhak, Qatadah and Muqatil have stated that some Jewish rabbis came before the Holy Prophet, and they said: "O Muhammad, tell us what is your Lord like, so that we may believe in you. Allah in the Torah has sent down His description. Kindly tell us of what He is made, what is His sex, whether He is made of gold, copper, brass, iron, or silver, and whether He eats and drinks. Also tell us from whom He, has inherited the world, and who will inherit it after Him. " Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah.
(8) Ibn Abbas has reported that a deputation of the Christians of Najran along with seven priests visited the Holy Prophet upon whom be peace), and they said: "O Muhammad, tell us what is your Lord like and of what substance He is made. "The Holy Prophet replied: "My Lord is not made from any substance: He is unique and exalted above everything. "Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah.
These traditiona show that different people on different occasions had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the essence and nature of the God to Whose service and worship he invited the people, and on every occasion he recited by Allah's command this very Surah in response. First of all, the pagans. of Quraish asked him this question in Makkah, and in reply this Surah was sent down. Then, at Madinah, sometimes the Christians, and sometimes the other people of Arabia, asked him questions of this nature, and every time Allah inspired him to recite this very Surah in answer to them. In each of these traditions, it has been said that this Surah was revealed on this or that occasion. From this one should not form the impression that all these traditions are mutually contradictory. The fact is that whenever there existed with the Holy Prophet a verse or a Surah previously revealed in respect of a particular question or matter, and later the same question was presented before him, flllah inspired hiin to recite ilie saine verse or Surah to the people as it contained the answer to their question. The reporters of Hadith describe the same thing, saying: When such and such a question or matter was presented before the Holy Prophet, such and such a verse or Surah was revealed. This has also been described as repetition of revelation, i. e. the revelation of a verse or Surah several times.
Thus, the fact is that this Surah is Makki, rather in view of its subject matter a Surah revealed in the earliest period at Makkah, when detailed verses oF the Qur'an dealing with the essence and attributes of Allah Almighty had not yet been revealed, and the people hearing, the Holy Prophet's invitation to Allah, wanted to know what was his Lord like to whose worship and service he was calling them. Another proof of this Surah's being one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed is that when in Makkah Umayyah bin Khalaf, the master of Hadrat Bilal, made him lie down on burning sand and placed a heavy stone on his chest, Bilal used to cry "Ahad, Ahad! "This word was derived from this very Surah.
Theme and Subject Matter

A little consideration of the traditions regarding the occasion of the revelation of this Surah, shows what were the religious concepts of the world at the time the Holy Prophet began to preach the message of Tauhid. The idolatrous polytheists were worshipping gods made of wood, stone, gold, silver and other substances. These gods had a form, shape and body. The gods and goddesses were descended from each other. No goddess was without a husband and no god without a wife. They stood in need of food and drink and their devotees arranged these for them. A large number of the polytheists believed that God assumed human form and there were some people who descended from Him. Although the Christians claimed to believe in One God, yet their God also had at least a son, and besides the Father and Son, the Holy Ghost also had the honor of being an associate in Godhead: so much so that God had a mother and a mother-in-law too. The Jews also claimed to believe in One God, but their God too was not without physical, material and other human qualities and characteristics. He went for a stroll, appeared in human form, wrestled with a servant of His, and was father of a son, Ezra. Besides these religious communities, the zoroastrians were fire worshippers, and the Sabeans star worshippers. Under such conditions when the people were invited to believe in Allah, the One; Who has no associate, it was inevitable that questions arose in the minds as to what kind of a God it was, Who was one and Only Lord and invitation to believe in Whom was being given at the expense of all other gods and deities. It is a miracle of the Qur'an that in a few words briefly it answered all the questions and presented such a clear concept of the Being of Allah as destroyed all polytheistic concepts, without leaving any room for the ascription of any of the human qualities to His Being.

Merit and Importance

That is why the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) held this Surah in great esteem, and he made the Muslims realize its importance in different ways so that they recited it frequently and disseminated it among the people. For it states the foremost and fundamental doctrine of Islam (viz. Tauhid) in four such brief sentences as are immediately impressed on human memory and can be read and recited easily. There are a great number of the traditions of Hadith, which show that the Holy Prophet on different occasions and in different ways told the people that this Surah is equivalent to one third the Qur'an. Several ahadith on this subject have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud; Nasai, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani and other books, on the authority of Abu Said Khudri, Abu Hurairah, Abu Ayyub Ansaari, Abu ad-Darda, Muadh bin Jabal, Jabir bin Abdullah, Ubayy bin Kab, Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Ibn Umar, Ibn Masud, Qatadah bin an-Numan, Anas bin Malik, and Abu Masud (may Allah be pleased with all of them). The commentators have given many explanations of the Holy Prophet's this, saying. But in our opinion it simply means that the religion presented by the Qur'an is based on three doctrines: Tauhid, Apostleship and the Hereafter. This Surah teaches Tauhid, pure and undefiled. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (upon whom he Peace) regarded it as, equal to one-third of the Qur'an.

A tradition on the authority of Hadrat Aishah has been related in Bukhari, Muslim and other collections of the Ahadith, saying that the Holy Prophet sent a man as leader of an expedition. During the journey he concluded his recitation of the Qur'an in every Prayer with Qul Huwa-Allahu ahad. On their return him companions mentioned this before the Holy Prophet. He said: "Ask him why he did so. "When the man was asked, he replied: "In this Surah the attributes of the Merciful God have been stated; therefore, I love to recite it again and again. " When the Holy Prophet heard this reply, he said to the people: "Inform him that Allah holds him in great love and esteem. "
A similar incident has been related in Bukhari, on the authority of Hadrat Anas. He says: "A man from among the Ansaar led the Prayers in the Quba Mosque. His practice was that in every rakah he first recited this Surah and then would join another Surah to it. The people objected to it and said to him: "Don't you think that Surah Ikhlas is by itselt enough? Why do you join another Surah to it? You should either recite only this surah, or should leave it and recite some other Surah. He said: "I cannot leave it, I would rather give up leadership in the Prayer, if you so desired. "The people did not approve that another man be appointed leader instead of him. At last, the matter was brought before the Holy Prophet. He asked the man, "What prevents you from conceding what your companions desire? What makes you recite this particular Surah in every rakah? "The man replied: "I have great love for it. "The Holy Prophet remarked: "Your this love for this Surah has earned you entry into Paradise. "

113. Falaq:

Name
Although these two Surahs of the Qur'an are separate entities and are written in the Mushaf also under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other's that they have been designated by a common name Mu'awwidhatayn (the two Surahs in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imam Baihaqi in Dala'il an-Nubuwwat has written that these Surahs were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is Mu'awwidhatayn. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below.
Period of Revelation
Hadrat Hasan Basri, 'Ikrimah, 'Ata' and Jabir bin Zaid say that these Surahs are Makki. A tradition from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madani and the same view is held also by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatadah. One of the traditions which strengthens this second view is the Hadith which Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal have related on the authority of Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir. He says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peach) one day said to him: "Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight? - these matchless verses are A'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq and A'udhu bi-Rabbin-nas. This Hadith is used as an argument for these Surahs to be Madani because Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir had become a Muslim in Madinah after the

hijrah, as related by Abu Da'ud and Nasa'i on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Sa'd, Muhiyy-us-Sunnah Baghawi, Imam Nasafi, Imam Baihaqi, Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Hafiz Badr-uddin 'Ayni, 'Abd bin Humaid and others to the effect that these Surahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Madinah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Sa'd has related on the authority of Waqidi that this happened in AH 7. On this very basis Sufyan bin Uyainah also has described these Surah as Madani.

But as we have explained in the Introduction to Surah Al-Ikhlas, when it is said about a certain Surah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Surah or a verse had previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Holy Prophet's attention was drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same also was the case with the Mu'awwidhatayn. The subject matter of these Surahs is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Holy Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madinah storms of oppposition were raised by the hyprocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Holy Prophet was instructed to recite these very Surahs, as has been mentioned in the above cited tradition from Hadrat Uqbah bin Amir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Surahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Surahs as Makki is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for to this incident related only one verse (v. 4), the remaining verses of Surah al Falaq and the whole of Surah An-Nas have nothing to do with it directly.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The conditions under which these two Surahs were sent down in Makkah were as follows. As soon as the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense. As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active. But when the Holy Prophet disappointed them completely that he would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the matter of faith, and in Surah Al-Kafirun they were plainly told: "I do not worship those who you worship nor are you worshippers of HIm Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine", the hostility touched its extreme limits.

More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam, were burning with rage from within against the Holy Prophet. They were cursing him, holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Bani Hashim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic

and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the jinn spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Qur'an brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him.
There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abu Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: "We and the Bani Abdi Manaf (to which the Holy Prophet belonged) were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations, we too gave donations, so much so that when they and we have become equal in honor and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him". (Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 337-338).
Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to tell the people: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that He has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious", and to tell them: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Deity of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men. " This is similar to what the Prophet Moses had been told to say when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. " (Al-Mu'min: 27). And: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me. " (Ad-Dukhan; 20).
On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of Truth against their strong opponenets, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile devices of the enemy, saying: "We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you. " Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power, that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: "I will not give up preaching the Word of Truth. I care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of all universe. "
Question whether Mu'awwidhatayn are, or are not, Quranic
The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Surahs, but since three points in the books of Hadith and commentary

concerning these Surahs have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Surahs are the Qur'anic Surahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard. This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious Companion like Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud, it has been said that he did not regard these two Surahs as the Surahs of the Qur'an and had eliminated these from his copy of the Mushaf. Imam Ahmad, Bazzaar, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Ya`la, Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydi, Abu Nu'aim, Ibn Hibban and other traditionists have related this from Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud with different chains of transmitters and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Surahs from the Mushaf but it has also been reported that he used to say: "Do not mix up with the Qur'an that which is not of the Qur'an. These two Surahs are not included in the Qur'an. This was only a command enjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for seeking God's refuge. " In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Surahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Qur'an, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption. For when, according to a Companion of the rank of Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud, these two Surahs are an annexation to the Qur'an, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made in it. To rid the Qur'an of this blame Qadi Abu Bakr Al-Baqillani, Qadi Iyad and others took the stand that Ibn Mas'ud was not in fact a denier of the Mu'awwidhatayn being Qur'anic but only refused to write them in the Mushaf. For, according to him, only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had allowed, should be written in the Mushaf, and Ibn Mas'ud did not receive the information that the Holy Prophet had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) had denied that these were Surahs of the Qur'an. Some other scholars, for instance, Imam Nawawi, Imam Ibn Hazm and Imam Fakhr-udding Razi, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood that Ibn Mas'ud had asserted any such thing. But to reject genuine historical facts without sound evidence is unscientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Qur'an because of these traditions of Ibn Mas'ud correctly refuted? This question has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

(1) Hafiz Bazzaar after relating these traditions of Ibn Mas'ud in his Musnad, has written that he is solitary and isolated in his this opinion; no one from among the Companions has supported this view.

(2) The copies of the Qur'an which the third Caliph, Hadrat Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), had got compiled by the consensus of the Companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Claiphate officially to the centres of the world of Islam contained both these Surahs.

(3) The Mushaf which, since the sacred time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Surahs. The solitary opinion of only Abdullah bin Mas'ud, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.
(4) It is confirmed by sound and reliable ahadith from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that he not only recited these Surahs in the Prayer himself but instructed others also to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Surahs of the Qur'an. Consider, for instance, the following ahadith:
We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Nasai the tradition of Hadrat Uqbah bin Amir that the Holy Prophet told him about Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas, saying that those verses had been revealed to him that night. A tradition in Nasai from Uqbah bin Amir is to the effect that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited both these Surahs in the Morning Prayer. Imam Ahmad on sound authority has related in his Musnad the tradition from a Companion that the Holy Prophet said to him, "When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Surahs in it.
In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai this tradition of Uqbah bin Amir has been related: "The Holy Prophet said to him: Should I not teach you two such Surahs as are among the best Surahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet taught him the Mu'awwidhatayn. Then the Prayer began and the Holy Prophet recited the same two Surahs in it also, and when after the Prayer the Holy Prophet passed by him, he said to him, 'O Uqbah, how did you like it? ' Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you get up from bed, recite these Surahs.
In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i there is a tradition from Uqbah bin Amir, saying that the Holy Prophet exhorted him to recite the Mu'awwidhat (i. e. Qul Huwa Allahu ahad and the Mu'awwidhatayn) after every Prayer. Nasai, Ibn Marduyah and Haakim have related this tradition also from Uqbah bin Amir: "Once the Holy Prophet was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred foot. I said: Kindly teach me Surah Hud or Surah Yusuf. He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq. " A tradition from Abdullah bin Abid al-Juhani has been related by Nasai, Baihaqi and Ibn Sad, saying that the Holy Prophet said to him: "Ibn Abid, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah? I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq and Qul a-udhu bi Rabbin-nas - both these Surahs. " Ibn Marduyah had related from Hadrat Umm Salamah: "The Surahs best liked by Allah are: Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq and Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbin-nas. "
Here, the question arises: what caused Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud the misunderstanding that these two are not Surahs of the Qur'an? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: first, that Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud asserted that this was only a command which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; second, the tradition which Imam

Bukhari has related in his Sahih, Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Humaidi in his Musnad, Abu Nu'aim in his Al-Mustakhraj and Nasai in his Sunan, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Hadrat Ubayy bin Kab, who held a distinguished place among the Companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Qur'an.

Zirr bin Hubaish states: "I said to Hadrat Ubayy: Your brother, Abdullah bin Mas'ud, says these things. What do you say about this view? He replied: I had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He said to me: I was told to say 'qul', so I said 'qul'. Therefore, we too say the same as the Holy Prophet said. " In the tradition related by Imam Ahmad, Hadrat Ubayy's words are to the effect: "I bear witness that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told me that Gabriel (peace be on him) had told him to say: Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq; therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say: Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbin-nas; therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Holy Prophet said.

A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word qul (say) in the two Surahs caused Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to say: A'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq and A'udhu bi-Rabbin-nas. But he did not feel any need to question the Holy Prophet about it. In the mind of Hadrat Ubbay bin Kab also a question arose about his and he put it before the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet replied: "Since Gabriel (peace be on him) had said qul, so I too say qul.

Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: "Say, I seek refuge", he will not carry out the command, saying: "Say, I seek refuge", but he will drop the work "say" and say: "I seek refuge. " On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: "Say, I seek refuge", and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatum to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anything from the text of the message.

Thus, the fact that these two Surahs begin with the word qul is a clear proof that it is Divine Word, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was bound to convey verbatum. It was not merely a command given to him for his person.

Besides these two Surahs, there are 330 other verses int he Qur'an which begin with the word qul (say). The presence of qul in all these is a proof that it is Divine Word. which was obligatory for the Holy Prophet to convey verbatum; otherwise if qul everywhere had meant a command, the Holy Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Qur'an, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully well how unreasonable it is to regard the Companions as infallible and to make the clamour that a Companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious

Companion like Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud about two Surahs of the Qur'an. If such an error could be committed by an eminenet Companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a Companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the Companions of the Holy Prophet of Allah. Concerning the Mu'awwidhatayn the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Surahs of the Qur'an, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these two Surahs is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Holy Prophet, and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel (peace be on him) had instructed him to repeat these Surahs to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole Shari'ah becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be Divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him. They also argue that these traditions clash with the Qur'an. The Qur'an mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet was bewitched (Bani Isra'il: 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earliest period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically, and did not at all care how the material supplied by them could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now, if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means, it is neither right for an honest and rightminded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor it is right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept histroy as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Holy Prophet's being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Abdur Razzaq, Humaidi, Baihaqi, Tabarani, Ibn Sad, Ibn Mardayah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Haakim, Abd bin Humaid and other traditionists on the authority of Hadrat Aishah, Hadrat Zaid bin Arqam and Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of the question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report (khabar wahid), we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) returned to Madinah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Madinah in Muharram, AH 7 and met a famous magician, Labid bin Asam, who belonged to the Ansaar tribe of Bani Zurayq. They said to him: "You know how Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coings, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muhammad. " In those days the Holy Prphet had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Holy Prophet's comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and the teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labid bin Asam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them.

Whatever be the case, Labid placed this spell in the spathe of a male date-tree and his it under a stone at the bottom of Dharwan or Dhi Arwan, the well of Bani Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the latter half of the year the Holy Prophet started feeling as if was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he way melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it: he thought he had visited his wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it.

All these effects were confined to his own person; so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet, no change occurred in the performance of his duties. There is no tradition to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Qur'an in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as Revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it.

God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamour and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Holy Prophet's position as a Prophet

remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account of it.

At last, one day when he was in the house of Hadrat Aishah, he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Hadrat Aishah: "My Lord has told me what I had asked of Him. " Hadrat Aishah asked what it was. He replied: "Two men (i. e. two angels in human guise) came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied: Labid bin Asam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhi Arwan (or Dharwan), the well of Bani Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be emptied and it should be taken out from under the stone.

The Holy Prophet then sent Hadrat Ali, Hadrat Ammar bin Yasir and Hadrat Zubair: They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyas az-Zurqi (two men from Bani Zurayq). Later the Holy Prophet also arrived at the well along with some Companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it.

Gabriel (peace be on him) came and told him to repeat the Mu'awwidhatayn. As he repeated verse after verse, a know was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm.

After this he called Labid and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Holy Prophet let him go, for he never avenged himself on anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to health; therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone.

This is the story of the magic worked on the Holy Prophet. There if nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capactiy if any injury could be inflicted on him as it happened in the Battle of Uhud, if he could fall from his horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the Hadith, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some Traditions and none of these negates the protection promised him by Allah in his capacity as a Prophet, he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a Prophet can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Qur'an. In Surah Al-A'raf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses, they bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (v. 116). In Surah Ta Ha it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: "Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down you staff. " (vv. 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not

call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under that effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician has, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) and not the Prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be peace), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological phenomenon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the Prophet Moses, had not actually become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes; even the senses of the Prophet Moses could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Al-Baqarah: 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learnt such matic from Harut and Marut as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it officacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands for years.

Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Surahs is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many ahadith it has been reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the Mu'awwidhatayn (or according to other reports, the Mu'awwidhat, i. e. Qul Huwa-Allahu Ahad and the Mu'awwidhatayn) thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was not longer possible for him to so do, Hadrat Aishah recited these Surahs herself or by his command blew on his hands hin view of their being blessed and rubbed them on his body. Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Abu Da'ud and Mu'atta of Imam Malik through authentic channels on the authority of Hadrat Aishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Holy Prophet.

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the Hadith a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, at the end of which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The people of my Ummah to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord. " (Muslim). According to a tradition reported on the authority of Hadrat Mughirah bin Shubah, the Holy Prophet said: "He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah. " (Tirmidhi). Hadrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud has reported that the Holy Prophet disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charsm and amulets except by means of the Mu'awwidhatayn or Mu'awwidhat. (Abu Daud, Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Hibban, Haakim). Some ahadith also show that in the beginning the Holy Prophet had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that is should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Qur'an. The words used should be understandable and one should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial. "
After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the Hadith says in this regard.

Tabarani in As-Saghir has related a tradition on the authority of Hadrat Ali, saying: "One the Holy Prophet was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion: it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting Qul ya ayyuhal-kafirun, Qul Huwa Allahu ahad, Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq and Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbin-nas, along with it. "

Ibn Abbas also has related a tradition to the effect: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to recite this invocation over Hadrat Hasan and Husain: U'idhu kuma bi-kalimat Allahit-tamati min kulli shaitan-in wa hammati-wa min kulli ayt-in-lam nati: "I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look. " (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwatta, Tabarani and Haakim about Uthman bin al-As ath-Thaqafi, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "Since I have become a Muslim, I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me. " The Holy Prophet said: "Place your right hand on the place where you feel the pain, then recite Bismillah thrice, and A'udhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhiru ("I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear") seven times, and rub your hand. " In Muwatta there is the addition: "Uthman bin Abi al-As said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house. "

Musnad Ahmad and Tahavi contain this tradition from Talq bin Ali: "I was stung by a scorpion in the presence of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place. "

Muslim contains a tradition from Abu Said Khudri, which says: "Once when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muhammad, are you ill? The Holy Prophet answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name. " A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Hadrat Ubadah bin as-Samit, which says: "The Holy Prophet was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said: Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above Hadith. A tradition similar to this has been related on the authority of Hadrat Aishah also in Muslim and Musnad Ahmad.

Imam Ahmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Hafsah, mother of the Faithful: "One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifa, was sitting with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Holy Prophet said to her: Teach Hafsah also the formula. " Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai have related this tradition from Shifa bint Abdullah herself, saying: "The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Hafsah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blsiters as well. "

In Muslim there is a tradition from `Auf bin Malik al-Ashja`i to the effect: "We used to practice blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism. "

Muslim, Musnad Ahmad and Ibn Majah contain a tradition from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, saying: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Hadrat Amr bin Hazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good. " Another tradition from Jabir bin Abdullah in Muslim is: "The family of Hazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and the Holy Prophet permitted them to practice it. " This is also supported by the tradition from Hadrat Aishah, which is contained in Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, and Ibn Majah: "The Holy Prophet granted permission to a family of the Ansaar for blowing to cure the evils effects of biting by every poisonous creature. " Traditions resembling these have been related from Hadrat Anas also in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Majah, saying that the Holy Prophet gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look. "

Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Haakim have related this tradition on the authority of Hadrat Umair, freed slave of Abi al-Laham: "In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Holy Prophet,

whereupon he told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it. "

According to Muwatta, Hadrat Abu Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Hadrat Aishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her: "Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah. " This shows that if the people of the Book practice blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) not only did not forbid anybody to have recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the Hadith in the Kitab at-Tib (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah's command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah's Word and His beautiful names also are made use of, or Word and His beautiful names also are made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason except for the materialists. However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

(continued. . .)

(continuing. . . 1) : Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam. . . . . .

Many people in this regard argue from Hadrat Abu Said Khudri's tradition which has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Ibn Majah, and it is supported also by a tradition related in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas. According to it the Holy Prophet sent some of his Companions including Hadrat Abu Said Khudri on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the travelers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Hadrat Abu Said said: "Yes, we do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised us to give us something. " They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Hadrat Abu Said went and started reciting Surah Al-Fatihah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place. Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of the poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the Companions said to one another; "Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Holy Prophet about it", for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Holy Prophet and related what had happened. The Holy Prophet smiled and said: "How did you know that Surah Al-

Fatihah could also be used for curing such troubles? Take the goats and allocate my share also in it. "
But before one used this Hadith for permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Hadrat Abu Said Khudri had recourse to it, and the Holy Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the Companions that such a thing was permissible.
The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were not hotels and restaurants where a traveler could buy food when he reached one of these after several days' journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveler reached a settlement the people of the place should extend hospitality to him.
Refusal on their part in many cases meant death for the travelers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) allowed as permissible the act of his Companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Surah Al-Fatihah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Holy Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure.
In Bukhari the tradition related on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas about this incident contains the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it. " He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts.
Furthermore, the Message also was incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinic in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) or his Companions, their followers and the earliest Imams.
Relation between Surah Al-Fatihah and the Mu'awwidhatayn
The last thing which is noteworthy with regard to the Mu'awwidhatayn is the relation between the beginning and the end of the Qur'an. Although the Qur'an has not been arranged chronologically, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arranged in the present order the verses and Surahs revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Qur'an opens with the Surah Al-Fatihah and ends with the Mu'awwidhatayn. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the Judgment Day, the servants submits: "Lord, You alone I worship and to

You along I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way. " In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Qur'an to show him the Straight Way, which is concluded thus: Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: "I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the Straight Way. " The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and insight.

114. Naas

See Mawdudi's Sura Information on: 113. Falaq